

Neither the Hills nor Rivers will Obstruct': Revisiting the East India Company's 1767 Expedition to Nepal.

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Statement of Academic Integrity

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Abstract

This thesis challenges existing nationalist and colonialist interpretations of the 1767 expedition to Nepal on behalf of the British East India Company, and those encounters that followed before the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816. The thesis then posits an alternative interpretation that explores the agency and influence of previously neglected, marginalized figures, by drawing upon the works and criticisms of postcolonial/decolonial approaches and Subaltern Studies, and new interpretative frameworks pioneered by borderlands studies.¹ Marginalized historical agents played a significant role within the events of 1767, determining the expedition's outcome and influencing subsequent approaches. There is furthermore a wider pattern of influential marginalized historical agency in Anglo-Himalayan encounters. Therefore, the inclusion of such marginalized experiences, agencies and agendas in our analysis of encounters proves critical to existing and emerging debates around who pulled the strings of EIC eighteenth-century colonialism.

¹ *Postcolonial* and *Decolonial* are historiographical approaches for which the parameters of each, and relation between the two, are not widely agreed upon. For the purpose of this thesis, the former incorporates the critique of colonial discourse, and the latter; a specific development from that critique that aims to bypass the colonial lens or pursue alternative readings within it.

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Introduction

‘From Sidely [Sindhuli] to Napaul, the road is reckoned extremely good,’ wrote Captain George Kinloch to the English East India Company’s Select Committee in 1767.¹ Kinloch intended to lead an army down this road, en route from Patna in modern day Bihar to Kathmandu in Nepal. This would be a military intervention: earlier that year the Company had received a request for help from Jaya Prakash Malla, the Raja of Kathmandu. His position was severely threatened by Prithvi Narayan Shah, the Raja of the neighbouring Gorkha city-state. Shah had been waging a long war against the Malla dynasty cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur. His Gorkhali soldiers had conquered a succession of smaller states in the Himalayan foothills and encircled Nepal Valley. At this point, the Malla King wrote to the British, requesting assistance. The Company, newly established in Bengal and Bihar after the battles of Plassey and Buxar, were at first hesitant. However, increasingly concerned that the inter-Himalayan conflict had reduced trade in timber and silk from Tibet, they eventually decided that these incentives warranted involvement. They ordered a detachment of *sepoys*, led by Kinloch, into the hills to break the Gorkhali siege.²

Before the year was out, Kinloch would regret his early optimism. Late in the summer he led the delayed expedition through jungles, villages and mountains in what was to be a disastrous failure. The unlucky troupe found the terrain far tougher than was expected and were harried at every point and turn, suffering famine, fever and defeat. Disappointment and miscommunication characterized the journey. The surviving remnants of the Bengal Army filtered back to the East India Company (hereafter EIC) outpost at Bettiah whilst Shah broke Malla resistance in the valley, going on to conquer and unify what was to become the modern state of Nepal.

After 1767 the EIC maintained their interest in Nepal and the wider Himalayas. Successive Governor-Generals in Calcutta hoped for greater authority and presence in the region with which to enhance the security of their Bengal possessions, increase commercial profits and obtain lucrative access to overland trade routes to China. To that end, a number of expeditions followed the 1767 invasion: commercial, diplomatic and military in their composition and mission. These included the ventures of James Logan in the 1770s, George Foxcroft in the 1780s, William Kirkpatrick and Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan in the 1790s, and William Knox and Alexander Buchanan-Hamilton in the 1800s. Alternative avenues were pursued in Tibet and Bhutan through the exploits of George Bogle,

¹ Note from George Kinloch to the President of the Select Committee, on the information of a Journey from Patna to Kathmandu, in British Library (hereafter B.L.) IOR/P/A/7 Bengal Proceedings 9 Jan 1766 -16 Dec 1767.

² A *sepoy* was a South Asian recruit within the EIC army.

Alexander Hamilton, Samuel Turner, Samuel Davis, and William Moorcroft. Their objectives ranged from gift exchange and espionage to greater ambitions of territorial acquisition, ratifying treaties and the establishment of a Nepalese residency. Yet by 1814, these efforts had achieved little. Himalayan trade remained merely a trickle, relations had deteriorated, and the EIC teetered on the brink of an expensive and expansive war with Nepal.

Important factors and people have been marginalized in explanations for the failure of Kinloch's expedition: various local, subaltern and peripheral characters rarely feature in existing historical accounts, which instead contribute to either a 'colonialist' or 'nationalist' interpretation of the past in which there is little space for the agency of such individuals. British colonial histories dismissed the significance of the defeat and prioritized the agency of Kinloch himself, subscribing to what has been termed an 'orientalist' view of the Himalayas.³ Nepalese accounts on the other hand regard the campaign as a key event within the nation-state's formation, emphasising the influence of Shah and his generals, a martial identity and overarching resistance to British expansion. In both narratives, local decisions, political allegiances, and economic factors have been rendered passive. This thesis therefore revisits EIC-Himalayan encounters between 1767 to 1814, investigating the influence, agency, and agendas of those marginalized factors and historical actors. The thesis asks; what role did they play specifically in the expedition of 1767? Are there any consequences of that role, and patterns in marginalized historical agency, to be observed in subsequent encounters up to 1814? Finally, how do the findings of this thesis relate to existing debates about British colonialism, Nepalese state formation and EIC-Nepalese, Anglo-Himalayan encounters in the late eighteenth century?

The findings of this thesis have a number of ramifications for wider debates within colonial and South Asian studies. Firstly, they allow for a closer investigation into the practical manifestations of what Edward Said called 'orientalism', and place significant emphasis on the role of South Asian collaborators and South Asian agency in the direction of colonialism. Secondly, they allow for critical engagement with an emerging Nepalese national identity. Finally, the findings emphasize the hybrid and changing nature of marginalized agency throughout the Himalayas, adding nuance to methodological debates surrounding the study of the encounter and opening new lines of enquiry into EIC-Nepalese and wider Anglo-Himalayan relations.

Chapter I first outlines problems within the existing historiography on European-Himalayan encounters in the late eighteenth century, exploring colonialist and nationalist

³ The usage of Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* is discussed in more detail in chapter II.

discourse and the exclusion of marginalized historical agents. The historiographical debates that their inclusion could contribute to are then discussed. Chapter II explains the conceptual and analytical frameworks adopted, as well as the source-based, methodological parameters, that allow the historian to explore marginalized agency and influences within these encounters. Chapters III focuses on the belligerents involved in the 1767 expedition including its causes, plans and preparations. Chapter IV considers the role of previously marginalized historical agents within a series of encounters, as Kinloch's expedition made progress to Kathmandu. Chapter V then charts the significance of those encounters, and the continuing role of marginalized agency, in the expedition's aftermath and further relations between Nepal and the EIC until 1795. Chapter VI continues that restorative, explorative project yet expands its boundaries both spatially into Bengal, Bhutan and Tibet, and chronologically into the early nineteenth century. Chapter VII then concludes, by highlighting ways in which the findings of the thesis contribute to and intersect previously outlined historiographical debates surrounding British colonialism, Nepalese state formation and identity, and the nature of the 'encounter' in the late eighteenth century.

Chapter I - Limitations of Colonialist and Nationalist Accounts of 1767

Summary

Two historical approaches have dominated writing on the 1767 expedition and those that followed: a selective interpretation in Great Britain that fits into a colonialist discourse, and a fiercely nationalist interpretation in Nepal. This chapter takes the primary features of those two narratives, beginning with colonial visions of the Himalayas then considering history writing in Nepal, and situates them alongside recent developments, both in a historiographical sphere and a political one, in a postcolonial demonstration of their flaws. Both are equally outdated and dismissive of the complexities of the 1767 expedition, rendering significant local, subaltern and peripheral factors passive. Existing challenges to these established interpretations are then outlined, with an appraisal of their successes and explanations for their limitations. It is then posited that the approach of this thesis, an investigative project in which the roles of marginalized historical agents are explored and emphasized, will provide answers to the many questions raised by the shortcomings in existing historiography, and furthermore contribute significantly to our understanding of EIC-Nepalese encounters, colonial power and resistance in this era.

I:1 Forgetting Kinloch

In British history writing, a selective interpretation of the 1767 expedition has endured that fits into a colonialist discourse: perpetuating stereotypes and prioritizing the EIC's agency, agenda and perceptions above those of the people that the expedition encountered. This interpretation is notably manifest in the expedition's omission on the basis that it ended in defeat: the venture rarely features in textbooks about the EIC.¹ Even in more specific works detailing Britain's martial relationship with Nepal, it is sometimes absent. For instance, George MacMunn's history of the *Gurkhas* does not feature the events of 1767, despite including a similar intervention a few years previously on behalf of the Nawab of Murshidabad.² Historians attempting to write a narrative of the EIC over centuries and continents may be forgiven for the omission of some smaller ventures, yet according to most reports Kinloch set out with somewhere in the region of 2,400 soldiers, accompanied

¹ For instance, John Keay, *The Honourable Company* (New York: Macmillan, 1994) or Nick Robins, *The Corporation that Changed the World* (Abingdon: Pluto Press, 2012).

² George MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1933), p.186.

by an entourage of family members and merchants. Sources indicate the Bengal Army in 1770 was composed of 4,000 Europeans and 26,000 Indian Sepoys, making this a sizeable enterprise with almost ten percent of the Bengal Army on the march.³ In the case of the 1767 expedition, the inclusion in any historical writing of such a disastrous venture, and South Asian triumph, would have challenged visions of British martial prowess and power.

Histories of British relations with the Himalayas that do address the expedition fit squarely into a colonialist discourse, reconciling the aberration of Kinloch's failed expedition as a necessary learning curve for eventual success, achieved in the later Anglo-Nepalese war.⁴ There is no acknowledgement in these accounts that the expedition was undermined by the non-co-operation and resistance of marginalized agents, or that there were regional political agendas involved in the establishment of communications and supplies that would prove critical to the expedition. Instead, human error on behalf of Kinloch, and the intervention of unpredictable natural forces, orchestrated the failure. Many other EIC attempts to establish relations with Nepal that are discussed within this thesis have likewise received as little scholarly attention as they did public attention at the time: the diplomatic missions of James Logan in the 1770s, George Foxcroft in the 1780s, and William Knox in the 1800s. Those ventures more likely to feature, both in contemporary and in historical accounts, were those considered more successful – that of William Kirkpatrick in the 1790s and Alexander Buchanan-Hamilton accompanying Knox in the 1800s. Discussion around their political, commercial agendas is still limited, since in that respect they likewise ended in failure for the EIC. Instead, these two experiences exist as anomalies because they contributed to an emergent colonial knowledge base and discourse through the publication of associated travel accounts.

In many histories of the 1767 expedition there are elements of what Edward Said has called 'orientalism'. He described this as a 'western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient'.⁵ The application of this by British colonial officials to Nepal is noticeable in the depiction of Shah as an 'oriental despot'. Although this theory had a long tradition in western culture, it appeared more regularly from the seventeenth century onwards, being applied to the Ottoman Empire, Persia and the Mughals in order to 'both characterise these Islamic governments as distinct from European ones and to warn against absolutism in Europe'.⁶ It was particularly espoused by Montequieu in his 1748 *De*

³ Figures taken from P. J. Marshall, 'British Expansion in India in the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Revision' in *Journal of the Historical Association*, 60:198 (1975), p.41.

⁴ Such as that found in William Henry Paget, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* (Simla, Government Monotype Press, 1907), p.7.

⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 3rd edn (England: Penguin, 2003), p.3.

⁶ Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'Romantic Attitudes toward Oriental Despotism', *The Journal of Modern History*, 85:2 (2013), p.284.

l'esprit de Lois, which drew upon travel accounts such as that of Francois Bernier.

Montesquieu 'defined despotism as a system of government based on fear, one in which the ruler stands above the law, unlimited by intermediate political powers such as an independent aristocracy. Arguing that the inhabitants of warm climates are by nature servile, Montesquieu maintained that despotism was inevitable in Asia, whose inhabitants lacked the will to defend their freedom. He further argued that the passivity associated with Oriental despotism was among the reasons why Asian societies remained unchanged for thousands of years'.⁷ It was a theory reinforced by Alexis De Tocqueville in the nineteenth century, who likewise did not believe that South Asian states were capable of any other form of governance without the intervention of the Christian missions.⁸ This interpretation was therefore already established when Captain Kirkpatrick visited Kathmandu on a diplomatic mission in 1793. His observations included 'the cruelty he manifested in the treatment of inhabitants of kirtipoor [Kirtipur, Nepal Valley], in his ungenerous rigour towards the Patan sovereign and some other occasions'.⁹ Kirkpatrick was referring to the Siege of Kirtipur in 1766 that began the Gorkhali descent into the valley. He perpetuated a story of Shah's personal ruthlessness, wherein he notoriously ordered soldiers to cut off the lips and noses of the defeated inhabitants and executed the Raja of Patan. This account was published in 1811. Within three years, the EIC had invaded Nepal – regarding it as aggressive and expansive. Kirkpatrick, influenced by previous reports of violence, had reinforced an orientalist knowledge of Nepal that was then used to justify invasion and partial annexation. In doing so, he assumed the validity of despotic imagery, neglecting the nuances and complexities involved in the siege of Kirtipur.¹⁰

What is also striking for the purpose of this thesis's reinterpretation of Kinloch's expedition is how reactionary and passive the local population is in these narratives. The view from the central British colonial metropole was that the periphery was reactionary, shaped by a British directorate in London that revolved around trade and wealth accumulation.¹¹ The flipside to London's centrality and the EIC as the primary historical catalyst is that the local is neglected. As a result of this, for the greater part of the twentieth century Nepal has mostly been defined in British histories of the colonial era by its relationship to British India. In the specific example of the 1767 expedition, whilst the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Lawrence Ziring, review of *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India*, by Michael Curtis, *The Review of Politics*, 72:2 (2010), 370-373.

⁹ B.L. IOR/H/395 Memoir of Nepal by Captain William Kirkpatrick, 1798.

¹⁰ This event is discussed in greater detail in chapter III.

¹¹ This trend is summarized by Sudipta Sen, 'Colonial Frontiers of the Georgian State: East India Company's Rule in India,' *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7 (1994), p.368.

Gorkhalis are at least credited (or discredited) with influencing the outcome of events to some degree through their guerrilla tactics, the form that influence takes is predetermined by an orientalist discourse that describes them as ‘behaving despicably’.¹² Although there is some discussion of Kinloch’s difficulty moving through the country, there is no account of his difficulties in communicating with the villagers and people he met along the way. Those societies local to the space in which this expedition takes place are thus entirely absent and entirely passive in both the nationalist and colonialist accounts, something this thesis intends to rectify.

The colonialist discourse interpreted the Gorkhalis that opposed Kinloch as militant and martial, with some notable adaptations that benefited colonial agendas. This derived from nineteenth-century Darwinism and ideas of ‘martial races,’ a construct that allowed for the progression in British history writing of a *Gurkha* martial identity. This was initially responding to a particular set of colonial problems – the EIC in 1816 had found their campaigns against Gorkha tougher than expected and were now faced with a defeated state on the edge of their subcontinent possessions that could hunger for revenge. The solution was to instil in this populace a natural identity that counteracted that hunger, by amalgamating the resistant forces that the EIC faced into its own military ranks. The Bengal army was increasingly stretched, yet the recruitment did not just bolster the army, it also pacified that frontier.

This is an identity that has endured and developed despite a successful critique of the concept by Heather Streets, who specifically engaged with the martial identity of Sikhs, Highlanders and *Gurkhas*.¹³ For Streets, what began as either a colonial anecdote or scientific theory could be augmented by the other, told and retold, until it became an accepted identity. In turn, they then worked their influence on military recruitment officers and commanders in India, from whence they originated.¹⁴ Nepalese assistance during the 1857 rebellion helped further establish them as one of Britain’s martial allies, with loyalty biologically determined, and thus different to the untrustworthy, rebellious sepoys. This became increasingly important as Indian nationalism gathered pace, and British colonial officials rallied around what MacMunn called ‘their lack of interest in...anti-British intrigue and hatred’.¹⁵ The continuance of these nineteenth-century constructions has influenced the regional cultures of the Highlands, Punjab and Nepal. They came to overshadow other

¹² Quoted in Shaphalya Amatya, ‘British Diplomacy and its various Mission in Nepal from 1767 to 1799’, *Ancient Nepal*, 6 (October 1969), p.1.

¹³ Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.54.

¹⁵ MacMunn, *The Martial Races*, p.199.

regional, marginalized expressions of cultural identity. Stanley Wolpert's description of Nepal is such a reduction, in which 'Nepal's Hindu royal family... and their Brahman ministers ruled over a predominantly Tibeto-Mongol populace of hearty martial *Gurkhas* and peasant Newars'.¹⁶ This depiction is far from true, since the Gorkhali and Newari populations made up a minority throughout the eighteenth century. It is an interpretation informed by the discourse of martial identity, combined with an elite figurehead, that neglects the local parties Kinloch encountered: neither Gorkhali nor Newari, instead occupying a borderlands space, often either non-military or conscripted soldiers.

A further defining feature of the colonialist vision of eighteenth-century Nepal that continues throughout its history is one of isolation, mystery and exclusivity. This is a view that is extended beyond Nepal to other Himalayan states such as Kashmir, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim. This began before 1767 with a simplicity of geographical determinism – that the hill-states of the Himalayas were rendered inaccessible from the EIC's position in Bengal and the plains through its terrain. Gorkhali protectionist measures however intertwined with South Asian apprehension over trading contact with British Bengal, and Shah was soon interpreted as highly isolationist. This infringed both the EIC's commercial ambitions and Adam Smith's visions of free trade, ideas promulgated by different parties in eighteenth-century Britain. Colonial reports then drew attention to the ritual cleansing of travellers returning to Nepal Valley, and the supposed universal detriment of Gorkhali trade restrictions to Nepalese and Bengalis alike.¹⁷

Such a historical interpretation greatly patronizes the Nepalese state and population, contributing to the wider colonial trope wherein South Asians were infantile and naïve, localized and isolated. This could then be used to justify colonial intervention and ambition in this space. Yet in 1767 it was far from the truth: both Shah's own wide-ranging diplomatic links, as well as travel, migration and trade networks of the Gorkhali population, demonstrate this. Shah courted the subservience and support of states far afield such as Mustang, whose Raja paid both land revenue to the Gorkha Durbar and trade duties to the Dalai Lama.¹⁸ Likewise people owing allegiance to Gorkha would regularly travel throughout the Himalayas, and loyalties shifted. Land rent was reviewed annually. Some tenants would take the opportunity to abandon tracts in favour of rates offered by the EIC, depending on whether the rates were lower, or whether the Company collectors

¹⁶ Stanley Wolpert, *India*, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.19. *Newari* is a cultural group within Nepal Valley. See the glossary.

¹⁷ According to Richard Burghart this was observed by Italian Missionaries and plays on the concept of a Hindu Realm as an autonomous universe. Richard Burghart, 'The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 44:1 (November, 1984), p.106.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.109. The term 'Durbar' refers to a South Asian royal court. See the glossary.

were ‘over-zealous’.¹⁹ This extended to Nepal Valley, where merchants and courtiers alike had developed strong bonds with Gorkha.

This vision of mysterious and secluded mountainous kingdoms, initially hostile yet overcome through the symbolic taming and harnessing to British colonial interests of the Gorkhali martial prowess, are components of a widespread, romanticized representation of Nepal. The country is now associated with the loyalty of the *Gurkhas*, alongside the imposing but conquerable silhouette of Everest, and the mysterious but accessible ‘Shangri-La’ experience. In the development of this representation, colonialists have identified Nepal as formidable but controllable. This renders western control over the people (the *Gurkhas*) and the country (Everest) all the more impressive, and creates an inferior/superior relationship. This representation is rooted in histories of that first military encounter of 1767, which began the dismissal of local populations as passive, the trope of the militant and violent Gorkhali, and the isolated, resistant hill-states. In light of this historiography, the expedition requires a reinvestigation.

I:2 Remembering Shah

Histories from South Asian scholars on the subject of early EIC-Nepalese encounters have been ardently nationalist in their interpretation: emphasizing the roles played by royalty and state leaders, anti-colonial sentiment, the political centre, and a national martial prowess. Much like colonial accounts, these narratives reflect the political priorities of the time in which they were written: either at the moment of decolonization in South Asia, during monarchical rule in Nepal from the 1960s through to the 1990s, or in the throes and aftermath of the Nepalese Civil War, up to the present, in what has been a turbulent half-century of national fusion and fissure. The assertion of a nationalist historical interpretation thus mirrors a period of nation-state and national-identity formation, in which the political centre of Kathmandu attempted to establish control over its peripheral territory and population in a country of over a hundred caste and ethnicity nationalities, speaking more than ninety languages and dialects.²⁰ In light of that construction this narrative is now being challenged not just in historical debate, but in that of the wider Nepalese public sphere.

The first pillar on which the Nepalese interpretation of 1767 rests is a prioritization of the role of royalty, Shah’s leadership and personal contribution towards Kinloch’s

¹⁹ Ibid., p.105.

²⁰ These figures taken from Sean McDonald, Bruce Vaughn, ‘Autonomy in the Southern Borderland of Nepal: A Formula for Security or Cause of Conflict?’, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 28:2 (2013), p.155.

defeat, over those of other historical agents. These histories write about Shah in glorifying language, for instance describing ‘the noble ambition of the Gurkha Raja Prithivi [sic] Narayan Shah’s unification of Nepal’.²¹ They forge a link between royalty and stability; a link that has been cultivated for centuries, drawn upon by succeeding kings and royalists in moments of political turmoil (notwithstanding the hiatus of the Rana family interregnum, wherein prime-ministerial authority superseded that of the monarch.) It perpetuates the presumption that the history of Nepal can be explained through elite-level politics: other figures prioritized in traditional interpretations of the 1767 encounter are the rajas of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, as well as Kinloch himself. To many, this reflects the balance of political power in Nepal. Kamal Malla reflected in 2006 that ‘the State in Nepal has always been the stronghold of a few elite families, the so-called *thar-ghar*, and this has not changed. Superficial changes in the political system have not succeeded in making any dent in the exclusivist political structure over the last half a century’.²⁴

This narrative is certainly reductionist. It does not consider the distance between Shah and his soldiers opposing Kinloch – engaged in the siege of Nepal Valley, separated by the foothills in which communications took time and the chain of command involved great degrees of autonomy, it is unclear how Shah could have played a more important role in these events than his soldiers in the region. More glaringly questionable is the link between royalty and stability emerging from Shah’s campaigns of war and violence, a link that was broken by the tragic massacre of the royal family on the night of 1st June 2001. This event prompted many Nepalis to ‘re-examine their views on the monarchy and seek some clarity’.²² Not only had the departed King Birendra been considered the epitome of royalty and national stability during a turbulent time, his successor King Gyanendra was deeply unpopular amongst non-royalists, dismissing parliament and ruling with absolute powers. This mounting pressure on the narrative of royalty and glory occurred alongside the rise of popular politics movements and a Maoist insurgency.

In response, defendants of Shah and a royalist-focused narrative have rallied around concepts of colonial resistance and the country’s unity. An interpretation has developed in which Shah foresaw the Himalayan states struggling to compete with the ascendant powers of the time: ‘even 250 years ago, it was evident to the country’s founder that his new nation had to contend with the geopolitical influences of its ... powerful neighbours’.²³ Faced with this vision, Shah annexed the smaller states around Gorkha as a

²¹ Amatya, ‘British Diplomacy’, p.1.

²² Manjushree Thapa, *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (India: Viking, 2005), p.53.

²³ Kunda Dixit, ‘Nepal: Dictated by Geography’, *World Policy Journal*, 7 (Winter, 2013/2014), p.36.

counter-colonial strategy. Baburam Acharya, one of the most prominent Nepalese historians, certainly emphasized this nation-founding agenda.²⁴ Similarly, the equally canonical Dilli Raman Regmi wrote 'Prithvi Narayan Shah was a nationalist to the core of his heart. With him, if conquest was the aim of life, patriotism was the guiding factor for any action'.²⁵ This features in more recent histories, such as that of Hem Raj Kafle who found 'discernible features of opposition and resistance, manifest in the Nepali military encounter with the British army in 1767'.²⁶ Because the Gorkhalis fought the British, their campaigns were anti-colonialist. Such a strategy was seen to justify the more violent episodes of Shah's conquest: 'to see only the weaknesses of Prithvi Narayan Shah by highlighting the myths of cruelties is to be deliberately blind and deaf towards his contributions,' going on to state 'the use of military force was essential'.²⁷ The fact that most of the states involved in this process now comprise the modern state of Nepal supposedly distinguishes Shah's campaigns as an act of unification, rather than empire-building.

This interpretation of the Gorkhali conquest of Nepal as anti-colonial, in its vision and realization, is problematic. Firstly, the term 'unification' suggests there was something to be unified, identifiable by shared characteristics. Yet the many hill states present in what later became modern-day Nepal varied wildly – they did not share the same language or religion, and by all means shared similar topographies, but no more so than they had in common with Bhutan to the east, or Kashmir to the west. 'National unification' implies the creation of a new, Nepalese national consciousness, which is not reflected in this ethnic, religious, linguistic and political diversity. Unification histories are also accompanied by the notion that these states were fragmented from a former whole, yet there was no previous political entity that corresponded so neatly onto Nepal's present boundaries. For this reason, historians like Kumar Pradhan have preferred the term 'conquest'.²⁸ Further questions remain. Why for example, with the vision of a colonialist squeeze, did Shah resort to violence against other Himalayan states as opposed to a communication of this vision? Did Shah not consider consolidating the existing Himalayan confederacies of the

²⁴ Baburam Acharya, *Nepal Ko Samikshipta Vrittanta (A Brief Account of Nepal)* (Kathmandu, 1966).

²⁵ D.R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal: Rise and Growth in the Eighteenth Century* (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961), p.100.

²⁶ Hem Raj Kafle, 'Prithvi Narayan Shah and Postcolonial Resistance', *Bodhi: An interdisciplinary Journal*, 2:1 (2008), p.138.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.144.

²⁸ Kumar Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, 2nd edn (Patan: Himal Books, 2009), p.xxvii.

Chaubisi Rajya and *Baisi Rajya*?²⁹ Scepticism on this point is reinforced by the fact that Shah's unification campaigns began well before the EIC's victory at Plassey. In this sense, they were arguably a continuation of an existing Gorkhali expansion project. Gorkhali anti-British resistance therefore does not account for 1767, although it did emerge in the aftermath, featuring in the *Divyopadesā*, a document that Shah is credited to have written in the 1770s.³⁰ Before then, there appears only mutual disinterest between the Gorkhali and British until Jaya Prakash Malla chose to involve the Company, contrary to the nationalist narrative.

This is a history from the centre: from the perspective of Kathmandu. In this interpretation, the encounter between Kinloch and the Gorkhali takes places in a nondescript, irrelevant space, somewhere between Nepal and British occupied Bengal. It is pitched as a battle of interests from the political cores of the belligerents – Shah and his court, Governor Verelst of the EIC in Calcutta. As Prayag Raj Sharma summarized, 'it is the history of this place [Kathmandu] which seems to have set in motion the course of events, as it were, happening in Nepal's distant and outlying regions.'³¹ This casts all other districts and former kingdoms as peripheral and reactive. Histories engaging with Kinloch's expedition have not considered these spaces – the frontier between Bihar and the jungles of the Tarai: the Sindhuli District foothills formerly of the Kingdom of Makwanpur. One such historian Ramesh Dhungel wrote:

In shaping Nepal as an independent country in South Asia, both the ruling elites and the common people of the region seem to have come forward with their full and whole heartened support under the leadership of the rulers of the tiny hill Kingdom of Gorkha. They appeared as if the entire populace of the region belonged to the same cultural tradition and ethnic background. Self-determined natives from their states and villages stood in unison to save the newly founded Himalayan state of Nepal from the common colonial enemy of the region.³²

Dhungel did not believe there was any noteworthy evidence of conflict or violence from the eastern Kirant region during the unification era. However, he looked for this evidence within archives ran by a government that censored educational material and opposed

²⁹ Both loose confederacies in western Nepal, the former consisting of 24 states (including Gorkha) in the Gandaki river basin mostly annexed from 1775 onwards, the latter consisting of 22 states in the Karnali-Bheri river basin annexed in the 1780s and 1790s.

³⁰ This document is discussed in more detail within chapters II and III.

³¹ Prayag Raj Sharma, 'Nepali Culture and Society: A Historical Perspective', *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 10:1 (December, 1982), p.4.

³² Ramesh K. Dhungel, 'Understanding Nepali History in the Context of Changing Political Situation', *Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies*, 37:2 (2010), p.170.

histories of resistance from the peripheries, without any consideration into how such material could be read ‘against the grain’.³³ Instead, he rejected the notion that there was a political consciousness worth considering outside of Gorkha itself and the Nepal Valley, calling the communities there ‘politically indifferent and silent’.³⁴

Yet it is clear that the communities in this space were not politically indifferent. By Dhungel’s own admission, rulers within Kirant were actively negotiating alliances with Sikkim and Tibet, to the extent that once conquered, Shah could not trust the Kirant elite in positions of power.³⁵ Moreover, violence and regional resistance did occur during Shah’s campaigns. Grégoire Schlemmer, writing on historical record-keeping and historical memory on the same marginalized region of Kirant, argued there was a violent war in which the Gorkhali were confronted with strong armed resistance. For this reason, Shah had to make accommodations upon conquest, granting resistant groups a certain amount of political and cultural autonomy with regard to land ownership.³⁶ Similarly Kumar Pradhan found, contrary to Dhungel, that there were political entities in the Tarai and Madhesh region, in which the 1767 encounter took place, evidenced by their payment of tribute to other hill-state rajas such as that of Tirhut.³⁷ He made the further point that smaller political communities, ‘though under the nominal suzerainty of the Sens, [the rulers of the Makwanpur state] enjoyed complete autonomy in the hills. The people knew only their immediate superiors, or their respective tribal chiefs.’³⁸

In today’s political arena, these regions are vociferous in their dissatisfaction with centralized control. This is currently prevalent in the low-lying strip of land at the bottom of the Himalayan foothills, a part of which Kinloch would have travelled through in 1767, which has been a centre of civil unrest in the wake of the 2015 constitution. In the western Tarai, Tharu people were unhappy that the resultant federal boundaries separated their traditional homelands whereas in the east, Madhes with social and cultural links to northern India were frustrated by new nationality laws within the constitution. These grievances fostered the ‘Quit Tarai’ movement, accusing Kathmandu of interfering in Madhes affairs as well as oppressing them through unfair representation.³⁹ This friction between a perceived centre and periphery, alongside Pradhan’s observations that there were

³³ Ibid., p.171. This methodology is discussed further in chapter II.

³⁴ Ibid., p.185.

³⁵ Ibid., p.179.

³⁶ Grégoire Schlemmer, ‘New Past for the Sake of a Better Future: Re-inventing the history of the Kirant in East Nepal’, *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 25-26 (2003-2004), p.120.

³⁷ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.84.

³⁸ Ibid., p.87.

³⁹ The new constitution reduced the number of official posts determined by proportional representation – there are over six million Madhes in Nepal. For a summary of this political situation, see McDonald, Vaughn, ‘Autonomy in the Southern Borderland’, pp.153-168.

marginalized political entities that did wield some political autonomy, calls into question the interpretation of Shah and the unification of Nepal as a national symbol. This thesis instead will therefore explore what Shah's victory in 1767 meant for the borderlands in which the conflict took place: how the Madhes there received Kinloch's expedition, whether they had historical links to India and eighteenth-century Bihar and Bengal. The thesis will ask how this region received Gorkhali expansion: whether, rather than being an anti-colonial champion, Prithvi Narayan Shah was something of a colonizer himself, whether they supported or resisted his campaigns, and how that choice directed his fortunes.⁴⁰

Another enduring feature in the existing literature is an idea of Gorkhali martial supremacy against the odds, woven deeply into a Gorkhali identity so much so that it has become a martial one, cultivated for centuries since by the exploits of Nepalese, or *Gurkha* regiments around the world. It stems from a narrative that the Gorkhalis won a pitched battle in September 1767 at Sindhuli Gadhi, in contrast to British accounts that record Kinloch's successful siege and occupation of that fort.⁴¹ Despite the uncertainty of how this conflict unfolded, Nepalese histories argue that the British were consequently put off further military intervention because of Gorkhali prowess, being further persuaded to recruit Gorkhali soldiers into its ranks during the Anglo-Nepalese war in 1814-1816. Sindhuli Gadhi is now the site of a yearly commemoration, taking place on 11th November, wherein crowds gather and the national flag is raised by military representatives.⁴²

The immediate problem with this imbedding of the martial Gorkhali into the national identity of Nepal is that the Gorkhali soldier represented only a minority of a country that they assimilated by conquest. Therefore, the victory that forms the genesis of this identity is not one that the whole of Nepal shares in. If a historian were to investigate the military history of the rest of the country, they would find defeat at the hands of the Gorkhalis – a relationship of failure and opposition rather than success and collaboration. Secondly, whilst *Gurkha* recruitment by overseas military forces like the British has since expanded its geographical base to encompass the whole country, it remains a national martial identity that excludes the overwhelming majority: many are either employed elsewhere, or ineligible by gender. A further problem developed during the Nepalese Civil

⁴⁰ The Madhes Janadhikar Forum, a regional political body, recently described Shah's conquests as 'internal colonialism.' Nishchal Nath Pandey, *New Nepal: The Faultlines* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2010), p.62.

⁴¹ Yogesh Raj, *Expedition to Nepal Valley: The Journal of Captain Kinloch, related to the Nepal Expedition August 26 October 17, 1767* (Lalitpur, Jagadamba Prakashan, 2009) p.27. An example of this pitched-battle-narrative is Tri Ratna Manandhar, 'British Residents at the Court of Nepal During the 19th Century', *Voice of History*, 17-20:1 (2005), p.5.

⁴² Rajkumar Karki, 'Sindhuligadhi War Remembered', in *Kathmandu Post*, 11 November 2013. <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2013-11-11/sindhuligadhi-war-remembered.html> [accessed 15 June 2019]

War, wherein the Nepal Army became tainted by reports of war crimes, blunders, and innocent fatalities. Their competence was further questioned by their failure to dislodge the Maoists, a guerrilla force estimated around 7,000 to 10,000 strong that had forced a military stalemate against their larger, better equipped state counterpart. Alleged boasts from the Army chief in November 2001 that the conflict would be over in six months further hindered its public image.⁴³ Finally, the martial reputation has been shaken by the struggle for political rights fought by *Gurkha* veterans around the world. Their battles in a political arena for rights of citizenship have drawn attention to a perceived mercenary status. One observer wrote: ‘Our textbooks had insisted that in all of South Asia, Nepal alone had never been colonized; the British were so cowed by us that they had recruited our *Gurkha* troops. But no one told us that the *Gurkhas* were, in fact, lesser paid, dispensable mercenary soldiers.’⁴⁴ Therefore, Gorkha’s military success from 1743 to the conquest of Kathmandu in 1767 should not entail the assumption of military prowess, or military strategic vision on behalf of Shah. This thesis consequently revisits the fighting strength and performance of the Gorkhalis and British sepoys in 1767, by questioning the recruitment and contracts of soldiers on both sides, the circumstances and surroundings in which they had to fight, and the reliability of the chains of command and bonds of discipline whilst operating in this borderlands space.

This version of a highly nationalist history blanketed over Nepal brings to mind Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’. For Anderson, it was imagined because ‘the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’.⁴⁵ The nationalist historians were attempting to propagate a shared history in the interests of stability and unity, without threatening the hegemony of elite control. This was problematic – they essentially had to fabricate or exaggerate the ‘image of communion’ Anderson spoke of. Their solution was to create and disseminate a version of historical events wherein that image was a benevolent, well-intentioned centre, drawing unconditional support in martial opposition to external, colonizing states like India or Britain. The problem is that this narrative is not shared by all – It celebrates the elite, the high-caste, the royal, and the martial from Kathmandu. In contrast, those outside that group are excluded, such as the conscripted recruits within the Gorkhali army from 1767 to 1814, the exiled messengers and guides serving EIC expeditions, non-belligerent villagers that they encountered, and

⁴³ As quoted in Prashant Jha, *Battles of the New Republic: A Contemporary History of Nepal* (London: Hurst & Co, 2014), p.73.

⁴⁴ Thapa, *Forget Kathmandu*, p.52.

⁴⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p.49.

those living along the Tarai borderlands, subject neither to Kathmandu nor Calcutta for most of this era.

I.3 Existing Challenges and their Shortcomings in Nepalese History Writing

Outside of Nepal, similar nationalist and colonialist historiographies have been reduced to rubble by postcolonial theory, and the contours of British rule around the world are being redrawn to emphasize marginalized and local participation, resistance and agency. As Huw Bowen has neatly summarized, ‘the models of Empire that are generally more persuasive now are ones of interaction, of exchange, of local difference rather than centralized uniformity, of micro-narratives contradicting the stately progression of the grand sweep, and these shifts have had the effect of producing a renaissance of interest in the early forms of imperial contact.’⁴⁶

In a South Asian context, historians have shifted from a vision of an eighteenth-century ‘dark age’ in which Mughal order rapidly collapsed and chaos ensued, towards one of de-centralized power and cultural vibrancy.⁴⁷ Amongst those advocating for this alternative reading were P.J. Marshall (who described it as an ‘evolution rather than revolution’), and Burton Stein (who emphasised pre-colonial continuity over political and cultural collapse) amongst others.⁴⁸ Notable bodies of work have therefore emerged on a number of South Asian polities, for example Stewart Gordon’s expansive work on the Marathas that drew a link between war and prosperity, or that of Muzaffar Alam, which showed how remarkable economic growth resulted in zamindari unrest and eventual de-centralization.⁴⁹ The EIC’s relations with these South Asian states have notably been explored by Christopher Bayly’s *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, a book that invested great significance in mercantile organisations, powerful intermediary groups, military fiscalism and wider global connections. This focused less and less upon the fortunes of elite power-brokers like Robert Clive, and more upon a series of localized relations, seeing the EIC-Indian encounter as one component within a much wider network.⁵⁰ The application of

⁴⁶ Huw Bowen, Margarette Lincoln, Nigel Rigby, eds, *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), p.xvi.

⁴⁷ These historiographical debates were excellently charted in Seema Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁴⁸ P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and Burton Stein, *A History of India*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁹ Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas: 1600-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-48* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁵⁰ C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

orientalism to South Asia has been charted by Ronald Inden, whilst Robert Travers has traced the extent to which oriental despotism informed EIC-South Asian relations, amongst other political ideas.⁵¹ The complexities of South Asian involvement in EIC expansion is well reflected in Kumkum's work on Indian credit.⁵² Questions of agency have been asked within Jon Wilson's *India Conquered*, and there exists a vibrant field of South Asian borderlands studies, which is explored further in chapter II.⁵³ A further cohort of revisionist historians identified with the Subaltern Studies Collective from India, spearheaded by Ranajit Guha in the 1980s.

Considering recent events in Nepal, such as the fall of the monarchy, and the problems evident in existing historical interpretations outlined so far, it is surprising that similar processes have not occurred within the historical writing on Nepal from 1767 to 1814. There have been very few historical accounts of Kinloch from British historians, let alone attempts to accommodate Nepalese regional or localized agency within that narrative, or those of subsequent expeditions. Likewise, in the Nepalese academy Shah's role and the centrality of Kathmandu have continually been prioritized.⁵⁴ This is present in both the academy and wider public discourse: on 12th January 2018 Shah's birthday was celebrated as 'National Unity Day' for the first time in over a decade.⁵⁵ These historiographies endure and the focus has not shifted to the non-elite, local or subaltern.

Nor has the history of Nepal been considered more comparatively alongside wider developments in the historiography of eighteenth-century South Asia. Interjections from Nepal are notably missing in discussions regarding decline and decentralization – there has been a continued emphasis on Malla rule as cultured and theatrical, the Gorkhalis violent and barbaric. Further opportunities have been missed, for example whether the rising Gorkha state holds any meaningful similarities with that of the Maratha Confederacy or the Sikh Empire. Whilst questions into the former could chart patterns in relations between the EIC and upland, confederate states with a supposed martial aptitude and martial reward system, a comparison with the Sikh Empire would be particularly poignant given that the two came into conflict in the early nineteenth century. The relationship between those

⁵¹ Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), and Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India: the British in Bengal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵² Kumkum Chatterjee, 'Collaboration and Conflict: Bankers and Early Colonial Rule on India: 1757-1813', in *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 30 (1993), 283-310.

⁵³ Jon Wilson, *India Conquered: British Raj and the Chaos of Empire* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2016).

⁵⁴ John Whelpton has previously stated that 'any history of Nepal has to be 'Kathmandu-centric' to some degree, though he may well have been referring to the lopsided number of museums, archives and institutions based within Nepal Valley, rather than the historiographical project I have outlined. John Whelpton, *A History of Nepal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.2.

⁵⁵ 'National Unity Day Marked,' *Himalayan Times*, 12th January 2019, <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/national-unity-day-marked-3/> [accessed 6th June 2019].

aforementioned intricate South Asian networks of mercantile and agrarian ties and the towns, valleys and villages of the Himalayan foothills has not been explored in sufficient detail, neither in the previously mentioned South Asian historical works such as that of Christopher Bayly, nor Nepalese or Gorkhali histories such as those of Kumar Pradhan or John Whelpton. Both academics stop short either side of the Tarai.

The reasons for this are multiple. Firstly, history writing in Nepal has been subjected to processes of censorship and propaganda: an educational program initiated by King Mahendra in 1955 that still affects textbooks and academic institutions after the end of monarchy, limiting not just the lines of enquiry opened up, but the resources available. Then there is potentially a historiographical and methodological explanation for why historians writing from outside the reaches of domestic censorship have rarely engaged with postcolonial, decolonial, and subalternist approaches: many of the existing Subaltern Studies writers including the original Subaltern Studies Collective focusing on South Asia have chosen to exclude Nepal from that geographical subject. This is rooted in more general histories of the region. Take for example Crispin Bates's sketch of the parameters for his survey book *Subalterns and Raj: South Asia since 1600*: 'although Afghanistan and the minor states of Nepal and Bhutan are sometimes included in discussions of "South Asia" they are not the central focus of this book, which concentrates on the region conceived since ancient times as *Bharat* and which has in more recent centuries been imagined as a territorially defined productive space; they are mentioned therefore only indirectly.'⁵⁶ This neglects the complex and long lasting political links between Nepal and the rest of South Asia. For example, the realm of the Bhāratas, from which the Republic of India takes its name and Bates takes his geographical parameters, included extensive lowland areas of what is now Nepal. Moreover, there are some Indian states that ceased being Nepalese territory comparatively recently, such as Himachal Pradesh in 1816.

Peter Hansen has suggested that history writing on Tibet has lacked a subalternist influence because that country did not experience a western-colonial conquest in which a subaltern social stratum would be established, amongst other reasons.⁵⁷ A similar explanation could account for both Nepal's exclusion in histories of South Asia and its exclusion from the historiographical innovations of postcolonial, decolonial approaches and Subaltern Studies. This immediately raises problems for the histories of South Asia that exclude Nepal on that basis – they define South Asia by colonial subjugation, and ignore narratives of resistance like that of Nepal. On the other hand, to exclude Nepal on the

⁵⁶ Crispin Bates, *Subalterns and Raj: South Asia since 1600* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.4.

⁵⁷ Peter H. Hansen, 'Why is there no Subaltern Studies for Tibet?' *The Tibet Journal* (2002), p.8.

grounds that it was not occupied by a colonial power is to misunderstand the discourse of colonialism entirely. Nepal and the Gorkhalis are rightly credited with holding off a numerically and technologically superior EIC army in the 1814-1816 war, yet military occupation was just one of many ways in which colonialism could operate – another was the previously described adoption of Nepalese *Gurkha* soldiers into the colonialist conception of martial races. Mary Des Chene has argued that the lack of colonial occupation in Nepal has contributed to a persistence of orientalism. This observation was based firstly on the notion that, by staving off colonial conquest, Nepal and Tibet inadvertently contributed to a longevity of ‘Shangri-La’ imagery - particularly an ahistorical vision of these places; timeless and simple, lacking history or historical change. Secondly, Des Chene noted that a missing canon of colonial era ethnographers separated critiques of colonialism in Nepalese history (and that of Tibet and Bhutan) from the rest of postcolonial studies.⁵⁸

A lack of subalternist writers, and the projection of contemporary elite concerns onto the history of Nepal has been lamented by historians. Ludwig Stiller for instance noted as early as 1974 that there was ‘an anti-British syndrome in much of the historical literature of Nepal,’ that he considered anachronistic: ‘Certain historians have read into the late eighteenth-century history of Nepal attitudes that did not develop historically until the time of the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-1816, or later.’⁵⁹ Pratyoush Onta likewise challenged the weighting towards political elites, arguing that ‘the history of the ruling elites is more often than not passed off as the history of Nepal’.⁶⁰ He emphasized that it was not his intention ‘to suggest approaches and topics other than those of the ‘history from below’ variety had been exhausted in Nepal,’ nor to ‘identify the history of subaltern classes as ‘social’ and that of the elites as ‘political’ or suggest that ‘elite and subaltern histories are somehow hermetically sealed and separate entities’. Instead, Onta drew attention to ways in which ‘the “history from below” approach was conspicuous in its absence in our historical literature’.⁶¹

Marginalized ethnic groups within Nepal have long been a popular topic amongst British historical anthropologists. The difficulty is not so much a shortage, but that they have traditionally been quite isolated. They have remained exceptions to the rule, being

⁵⁸ Mary Des Chene, ‘Is Nepal in South Asia? The condition of non-postcoloniality’, *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 12:2 (2007), p.212.

⁵⁹ Ludwig F. Stiller, ‘The Role of Fear in the Unification of Nepal’, *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 1:2 (June, 1974), p.42.

⁶⁰ Pratyoush R. Onta, ‘Rich Possibilities: Notes on Social History in Nepal’, *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 21:1 (January, 1994), p.2

⁶¹ Ibid.

written by British historians, and have not extended their anthropological conclusions beyond very specific, often ethnically classified groups. They contrasted quite starkly with the nationalist, high political Nepalese studies previously outlined in what was once called ‘the curious division of labour’.⁶² It would appear that British historians held an interest in the locality but not the nation-state, and the Nepalese academy vice versa. Since Onta made these observations in 1994 there have been contributions that transcend this division, some of which were showcased in a 2016 *Himalaya* journal.⁶³ These adopt different categories of analysis to the locality and ask how applicable that could be elsewhere within the country. This thesis hopes to build upon that literature, stretching further back to an earlier period of history.

There are notable works considering Gorkhali expansion and EIC intervention that shift the lens away from Kathmandu, Gorkha, or Calcutta and onto previously marginalized spaces, yet maintain an intersection with the wider Himalayas and thus do not become isolated and fragmental. For instance, Kumar Pradhan’s *Gorkha Conquests*, which has been described as a direct challenge to a nationalist orthodoxy by John Whelpton, in contrast to the texts of Baburam Acharya and the earlier work of D.R. Regmi.⁶⁴ Pradhan’s work draws attention to wider networks in eastern Nepal as well as localized concerns with Gorkhali unification/conquest campaigns, significantly on behalf of the *Chaubisi Rajya* hill-states between Gorkha and Nepal Valley. For a study of 1767, *Gorkha Conquests* is perhaps a little heavily orientated around eastern Nepal and Darjeeling, where he wrote, with its closer analysis spanning the 1770s and 1780s and the machinations of local elites: dewans and rajas of smaller hill-states, rather than communities and marginalized historical agents. It is likewise notably sparse on Nepalese-EIC relations altogether, contributing only a brief paragraph on the 1767 expedition.⁶⁵ However, such detail was never Pradhan’s intention. Instead, as his editor observed, ‘Pradhan contributes to a more specialist theme... the internal dynamics of South Asian political systems parallel to early colonialism’.⁶⁶ Its contribution thus augments studies of colonialism with inter-South Asian affairs, agendas and events, something wholly neglected by Colonial histories.

Kumar Pradhan’s work inspired others to write from the margins, notably Arjun Guneratne’s *The Tarai: History, Society, Environment*, a product of the same publisher, Himal

⁶² Pratyoush R. Onta, ‘Whatever happened to the Golden Age?’, *Himal*, 6:4 (1993), p.30.

⁶³ Sara Shneiderman, ‘Afterword: Charting Himalayan Histories’, *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 35:2 (2016).

⁶⁴ John Whelpton, ‘Introduction to the 2009 edition’, in Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.i. Acharya, *Nepal Ko Samikshipta Vrittanta*, and Regmi, *Modern Nepal*.

⁶⁵ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.111.

⁶⁶ Barun De, ‘Foreword to the 1991 edition’, in Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.xxii.

Books, in 2011. There have likewise been efforts from Prashant Jha and Martin Gaenszle who promoted marginalized histories and oral histories from the twentieth century respectively.⁶⁷ More recently, David Gellner has written directly about the Indian-Nepalese borderlands in a discussion of migratory groups.⁶⁸ However, these remain contemporary studies, rarely spanning so far back as the eighteenth century. For that era, twenty-five years after the first publication of Pradhan's *Gorkha Conquests*, the nationalist narrative remains the most prominent and these contributions remain exceptions to the rule.

I:4 Conclusions

The postcolonial, decolonial and marginalized approach to history, not yet thoroughly applied to that of Nepal, is certainly applicable to Kinloch's expedition and those that followed, and could remedy existing historiographical problems. The purpose of this study is to take such an approach. The thesis will shift the historical lens away from Prithvi Narayan Shah, Kinloch, Verelst, and the Kathmandu elite, towards popular classes, different competing interests, local geographies, passive resistance and colonial ignorance rather than knowledge. Rather than reinforcing a narrative of martial Nepal at the exclusion of others, it will focus on circumstance, discipline and decision-making in times of adversity. Rather than accepting and reinforcing an orientalist view of history that reduces Nepal to a passive, mysterious space, the borderlands in which these encounters take place will be situated alongside wider developments across South Asia. This will firstly involve a historical contextualization of the belligerents that operates outside of the existing nationalist and colonialist discourses so far identified. The 1767 expedition will then be reinvestigated, critically engaging with Kinloch's diary from the journey, asking questions over the individual's agency and influence, existing knowledge and its providence, that governed each encounter between Kinloch and those he met. Finally, having established who orchestrated these events and to what purpose, the thesis will highlight the impact of the 1767 expedition on future encounters, and similar instances in which marginalized, peripheral characters could have influenced the events that unfolded.

The findings of this thesis allow for the integration of eighteenth-century Nepalese history into that of South Asia, and its intersection with existing historiographical debates surrounding eighteenth century colonialism, state formation and encounters. They

⁶⁷ Jha, *Battles of the New Republic*, & Martin Gaenszle, 'Introduction: Representing Local Histories in the Himalayas', *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 25-26 (2003-2004).

⁶⁸ David Gellner, ed, *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia: Non-State Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

demonstrate how orientalism and ideas of oriental despotism worked ‘on the ground,’ at the point of contact between EIC and South Asian historical subjects. They also challenge the notion that the fortunes of colonialism were directed from imperial metropolises, their success determined by resistance or co-operation. Instead, the thesis advocates a more nuanced and complex web of competing and colliding interests, with different layers of collaboration both passive and active. In addition, the findings have ramifications for the history of Nepalese state-formation and Nepalese national identity: with regards the former, the narrative from within Nepal poses a significant challenge to outdated representations of South Asian decline in the eighteenth century. With regards the latter, assumptions into the relationship of peripheral societies and people with Kathmandu and the Gorkhalis are revealed to be incorrect. Subscription to the Nepalese state and national identity was not guaranteed, but contested. Finally, the thesis places greater emphasis on the significance of the subaltern in the Himalayas than has previously been advocated – opening up new lines of enquiry around patterns of marginalized agency and influence, and its potential within the study of the colonial encounter.

Chapter II – Navigating an Approach from the Margins: Historiographical, Methodological and Source-based Considerations.

Summary

This thesis builds upon postcolonial critique, adopting decolonizing, subalternist methodologies. Such a project invokes several difficulties that this chapter will address. Firstly, the usage of Said's *Orientalism* is discussed: how the idea has been critiqued and developed, and its application within this thesis. The critique of 'nationalist' discourse is then engaged with, through a discussion on writing the history of EIC-Nepalese encounters from an 'etic' perspective and the use of Benedict Anderson's work. The chapter then clarifies the definitions adopted by the thesis for some contested terms: 'agency,' 'indigenous,' 'local,' 'peripheral,' and the 'subaltern.' The thesis is then positioned in relation to the borderlands field of study. Finally, this chapter focuses on the methodological approach used to study Kinloch's expedition. It discusses the core text, how it is read, what particular problems are raised by the use of a colonial archive, and how these can be alleviated by decolonizing methods.

II:1 Critiquing Orientalist and Nationalist Discourse

Edward Said's *Orientalism* stimulated widespread debate when it was originally published in 1978, leading Sumit Sarkar to observe that 'it has become obligatory in many intellectual circles to begin with a critique of orientalism, of colonial discourse, if one wants to acquire or retain a radical reputation'.¹ However whilst many have praised his work and adopted Saidian frameworks as Sarkar suggests, others have dismissed it. For those reasons, this section outlines its utility for this thesis. It is posited that the difficulties and limitations in applying orientalism to the study of eighteenth century Anglo-Himalayan relations can be countered, by augmenting the discussion with a recognition of the role played by 'oriental despotism.'

Said originally explained orientalism as a concept drawn from western readings of Asian texts, then distributed, elaborated and maintained in scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts.² Such a construction is recognisable within the

¹ Sumit Sarkar, 'Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History', in Vinayak Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000), p.239.

² Said, *Orientalism*, p.12.

secondary literature on Nepal, from the nineteenth century onwards. The French Indologist Sylvain Lévi for example wrote his canonical *Le Népal: Étude Historique d'un Royaume Hindou* having travelled to Kathmandu, collected and consulted Sanskrit texts.³ This included reflections on the *Divyopadeś*, in which the script was dismissed as a collection of legends.⁴ This practice is likewise reflected in the work of Brian Houghton Hodgson, resident in Kathmandu during the early nineteenth century, and that of Daniel Wright, whose 1877 *History of Nepal* was completed after he consulted and translated the *vamśāvalis* manuscripts. With this authority Wright then attributed a series of violent acts to Shah, including the massacre of surrendering Lalitpur nobles upon conquering that city.⁵ Further afield, Chitrlekha Zutshi has demonstrated ways in which colonial officials prioritised and discussed Sanskrit texts in nineteenth century Kashmir. Whilst alternative, local texts were dismissed, orientalist debate focussed overwhelmingly on the Sanskrit *Rajatarangiri*, usually taking the form of 'sterile debates about whether these texts should be designated as objective historical texts or merely as poetry'.⁶

Although Said principally located oriental discourse in nineteenth and twentieth century texts, some historians have recognised the categorisation of the 'East' as the 'other' in earlier literary works. Ronald Inden for instance noted ways in which Hegel, Herder, and Schlegel 'made sharp and essential distinctions between the different parts of Asia'.⁷ Aspects of orientalism were certainly present within Robert Orme's *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, for example in his reflection that 'a nabob is so far despotic in his government [that] he has nothing to apprehend, but poison, or assassination from the treachery or resentment of his subjects'.⁸ This echoes Said's note that 'Orientals or Arabs are therefore shown to be ... much given to fulsome flattery, intrigue, cunning...'⁹

In relation to the events of 1767 as they were understood by contemporaries such as Kinloch and Verelst however, the application of orientalism incurs one principle difficulty that needs to be addressed. Said grounded visions of the 'Orient' in readings of South Asian texts rather than a physical encounter with India. In doing so, he did not account for occasions such as that of 1767 wherein someone actually encountered the East

³ Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal: Étude Historique d'un Royaume Hindou* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905).

⁴ Sylvain Lévi, 'Les Éléments De Formation Du Divyāvadāna', *T'oung Pao*, 8:1-5 (1907) 105-122.

⁵ Daniel Wright, *History of Nepal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1877), p.231. For a discussion on Wright's use of Nepalese sources, see Manik Bajracharya, Axel Michaels, 'On the Historiography of Nepal: The "Wright" Chronicle Reconsidered', *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 40 (2012), 83-98.

⁶ Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.5.

⁷ Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist Constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20:3 (1986), p.407.

⁸ Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, the Morattoes and the English Concerns in Indostan from 1659* (London: F. Wingrave 1782), p.400.

⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, p.38.

itself, and had their existing knowledge challenged and reshaped. The colonial agent is denied the capacity to observe, then reject or augment their existing knowledge according to that experience within the encounter. Furthermore, Said's idea of an orientalist discourse forged through elite, textual engagement has been said to 'foreclose investigation of elements of resistance or partial autonomy, and rob subordinate groups of agency'.¹⁰ It is a discourse in which the agency of individuals like Daniel Wright and Sylvain Lévi is prioritised. Consequent studies have thus rejected Said's notion of knowledge produced as 'a graft from the top,' instead 'arguing that colonial knowledge was dialogic, and that Indians participated in innovative and interesting ways in the production of colonial knowledge and that they were by no means entirely without agency in the endeavour'.¹¹ In doing so, they dismiss the notion of a monolithic colonialist discourse dictated by a central colonizing power, emphasising a colonial experience that tends to be located in 'a more negotiable cultural interface between Britain and India'.¹² This allows for a plurality of experiences that better reflects the ways in which categories like gender, caste, wealth and literacy could shape the colonial encounter for an individual. It furthermore diminishes the stark contrast between 'us' and 'them,' as the distance between the individual and the 'other' waxes and wanes. This approach to colonial encounters is certainly applicable to Kinloch's expedition: the local inhabitants that the soldiers encountered had varying knowledge of the British, and varying experiences of Gorkhali expansion, just as the sepoys and officers marching with Kinloch had varying familiarity with the Himalayan foothills. Once these different positions are accepted, it becomes apparent that those involved held different stakes on different bets. Any collective or individual response to the colonial enterprise was consequently unlikely to be passive and predetermined, but contested and changeable.

The most significant feature of orientalism in relation to the 1767 encounter is its emphasis on the concept of the 'Oriental Despot.' This was arguably rooted in the eighteenth century, featuring significantly in the works of Montesquieu amongst others (as discussed in chapter I). The theory consequently provides a bridge between the study of Kinloch and his contemporaries, and those later historical accounts to which Said's concept is more directly applicable. Eighteenth century British colonial authors Robert Orme and Alexander Dow both used Oriental Despotism to justify colonial rule, albeit in different ways. Whilst both agreed that the climate and fertile soil in South Asia rendered its

¹⁰ Sarkar, 'Orientalism Revisited', p.242.

¹¹ Lakshmi Subramanian, *History of India, 1707- 1857* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), p.96.

¹² Seema Alavi, 'Introduction', in Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.41.

inhabitants 'lazy' and 'incapable' of overthrowing a despot, Orme argued that the brutality of despotism justified EIC intervention, whereas Dow argued that this natural order, combined with a precedent for 'enlightened despotism' on behalf of the Mughals, should inspire the British to practice despotic rule themselves in India.¹³ It is also a concept that has been deployed more recently. For example, consider Michael Curtis, who draws parallels between eighteenth century visions of the Orient and what he perceived as contemporary militant Islam. Curtis wrote in order to 'retrieve European writing on the Muslim Orient as an aid to understanding contemporary Muslim Societies'.¹⁴ He argued that 'it is reasonable to conclude that the concept of oriental despotism is not an arbitrary exegesis, the result of prejudiced observation, having little relation to Eastern systems, but rather reflects perceptions of real processes and behaviour in those systems'.¹⁵ Given its continued usage in characterisations of the East in accounts such as that of Curtis, its creation and curation is worth reiterating.

In comparison to orientalism, which has arguably discounted agency on behalf of the 'oriental subject,' an exploration of writing on oriental despotism allows for the acknowledgement of the colonial encounter, and the various historical agents present within that. Rather than knowledge of South Asia being derivative from European readings of South Asian texts, the concept 'grew out of the interplay between travellers' observations and theoretical interpretations', according to Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi.¹⁶ Writers on the subject drew upon people like Francois Bernier who had visited India and encountered the subject that they wrote upon, and at times showed recognition of the different factors present within such a construction. For example Robert Orme added a caveat that his observations were 'a result of an attention given to this subject [Indian government] during a residence of several years in India, and that although I may be deceived myself, I can have no end in misleading others,' before proceeding to explain that 'the influence of the emperor, however despotic, cannot but faintly reach those parts of his dominion which lay at the greatest distance from his capital'.¹⁷ This better reflects the aforementioned 'negotiable cultural interface' that Seema Alavi called for as an explanation for the colonial experience.

¹³ Orme, *Historical Fragments*, pp.255-306 & Alexander Dow, *A History of Hindostan* (London: John Murray, 1772), pp.vii-xxxvii.

¹⁴ Ann Thomson, review of *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India*, by Michael Curtis, *The American Historical Review*, 115:4 (2010), p.1212.

¹⁵ Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.71.

¹⁶ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'Romantic Attitudes', p.281.

¹⁷ Orme, *Historical Fragments*, pp.255-306 & Dow, *A History of Hindostan*, p.394 & p.397. Orme's lack of self-awareness regarding whether he could write 'to an end' notwithstanding.

There is further space within the theory of oriental despotism to explore nuance in the different visions of Asia. This is arguably missing in Said's framework, which has been accused of having 'failed to notice the dissonance and polyvalence within colonial discourse as it developed over time, and then imbued it with an ahistorical, monolithic quality.'¹⁸ Within the works of those identifying and discussing the notion of oriental despotism however, there are multiple positions. It has already been established that whilst Orme and Dow both asserted that it was present in eighteenth century India, and that it paved the way for British colonialism, they disagreed on whether it was a positive or negative model for rule. Edmund Burke on the other hand deviated from this. His attitude toward oriental despotism was dictated by his criticism of the EIC. In the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of India and Jones's patron, Burke argued that Hastings had falsely justified company practices on the grounds that despotism was the traditional form of government in India, whereas in reality, according to Burke, Muslim states were governed by the laws of Islam and therefore were not despotic. At the same time, Burke accused the EIC of adopting the practices of oriental despotism and even introducing them into British politics.¹⁹ Burke joined a significant body of scholars who used observations on supposed oriental despotism in order to establish whether despotism was in fact being practiced closer to home. A more fundamental criticism from Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron rejected the notion of oriental despotism entirely. He argued in his *Législation Orientale* of 1778 that the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and the Mughal Empire enjoyed rational legal systems, condemning the theory of oriental despotism as an excuse for colonialism.²⁰

There has been much scepticism of British historians' commentaries on how nationalist movements have unfolded in formerly colonial countries, or countries like Nepal that were subjected to colonial pressure and orientalist representation. This scepticism becomes more profound if that commentary is critical or undermining, and stems from widespread criticism of earlier theorists who differentiated between 'western' and 'eastern' nationalism. The former was seen to be enlightened and rational, the latter cruel, despotic and aggressive. This differentiation originated in European concepts of race, and served an imperialist purpose - by observing Asian nationalist movements negatively, European scholars could deny that their former colonies were ready for independent

¹⁸ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, eds, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.9.

¹⁹ Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600–1800* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.165–169.

²⁰ Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'Romantic Attitudes', p.289.

nation-statehood.²¹ Alternatively, Asian nationalist movements have been written about positively, but only as colonial legacies – as much a European achievement as an Asian one. To take Indian historiography as a South Asian example, this is arguably the stance of historians associated with the *Cambridge School*. Anil Seal believed the emergence of Indian Nationalism, and the shape that independent India took, to be the result of Indian elites, educated in the United Kingdom, who upon their return to India ‘competed and collaborated’ with British colonial officials in their search for political power.²² Within that interpretation is the insinuation that Indian nationalism and the independence it was partly responsible for was a result of the elite’s patronage from British educational institutions.

This thesis has deployed Benedict Anderson’s concept of the nation as an ‘imagined community’ to demonstrate the construction of Nepalese nationalism, and its consequent effects on Nepalese history writing. However, this concept has been applied selectively, since Anderson’s original work does not map neatly onto Nepalese nationalism. The hypothetical imagined community he discussed was situated in Western Europe, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Beyond that, he discussed the newly independent republics of the Americas - nationalism only arose when ‘the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres - monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation - axiomatically lost its grip on men’s minds’.²³ This contrasts starkly with Nepalese nationalism which rallied around the monarch as a semi-divine Hindu figurehead.²⁴ It was rooted precisely in the belief that supposedly needed to lose sway over the population for Anderson’s imagined community to emerge. Anderson did address the subject of differences between ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ nationalisms, but stated that he himself did not believe that the most important distinctions among nationalisms ran along east–west lines.²⁵ Instead, what emerges from Anderson’s later work is that nationalist movements manifest themselves differently around the world. Nepal in particular does not fit neatly into either of his models, the Creole Nationalism, Official Nationalism or Linguistic Nationalism (although government attempts to homogenize the Nepali language can be seen as failed Linguistic Nationalism.)

There are furthermore some critics who do not believe histories of a country or society can be written from the outside – from an ‘etic’ perspective. They believe the

²¹ Benedict Anderson, ‘Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism: Is there a difference that matters?’, *New Left Review*, 9, (May – June, 2001), p.31.

²² Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

²³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.52.

²⁴ Bert van den Hoek, ‘Does Divinity Protect the King? Ritual and Politics in Nepal’, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 17:2 (July, 1990).

²⁵ Anderson, ‘Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism’, p.31.

parameters of an individual's European experience of nationalism restrict how accurate such a history can be. The basis of this argument is that the European historian, when faced with complex sources or unfamiliar contexts, is selective and reductive in their usage. Sumit Sarkar described the impression that 'the majority among even the small section of the western intelligentsia interested in the third world prefers its material conveniently packaged nowadays, without too much detail or complexity'. The etic historian preferred the simplicity of sources previously transcribed or presented, to the more difficult approach that included first hand source consultation. Sarkar continues: 'the West, it seems, to borrow from Said, is still engaged in producing its Orient through selective appropriation and essentialist stereotyping: orientalism flourishes at the heart of today's anti-orientalist tirade'.²⁶

It is a critique that has been directed at both cultural anthropologists and historians alike. One such targeted work was John Whelpton's *History of Nepal*. Kamal Malla draws attention to the book's bibliography, noting that of more than 250 items only five are in Nepalese, giving the reader 'the impression that the account is mostly based on secondary sources available in English and other Western languages'.²⁷ (Malla does not believe Whelpton to be an orientalist, stating that 'at least, it is not yet another "historical account" by a pontificating British civil servant, or a medical surgeon, a postmaster general, a military colonel, or a travelling emissary with no formal academic training in the rigours of historiography'.²⁸ His criticism is more that Whelpton's history of Nepal does not derive from Nepali language sources.) Whelpton responded by stating his book was 'not a presentation of original, front-line research but rather an attempt to produce, principally for the international English-reading public, a synthesis of what previous research has revealed'.²⁹ This reflects Whelpton's target audience and readership, but the problem remains that without the necessary translation skills an English language historian can only access visions of Nepalese nationalism through the lens of another English language writer, such as Whelpton, or the sources he in turn was assessing. (This can of course be counteracted by the use of the many Nepalese historians writing in English, which Whelpton's critics do not include in their count.)

²⁶ Sumit Sarkar, 'The decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies', in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, p.309.

²⁷ Kamal P. Malla, review of *A History of Nepal*, by John Whelpton, *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 29-30 (2006), p.183.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ John Whelpton, 'Response to Kamal Prakash Malla's Review of History of Nepal', *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 30 (2007), p.190.

These criticisms have stimulated a call for histories to be written by South Asian writers, from an ‘emic’ perspective. Richard Burghart argues that this approach ‘emphasizes the uniqueness of cultures and aims at the systematic description of those cultural categories that inform native social behaviour’.³⁰ Writing from an anthropological background, Burghart’s preference for ‘nativist’ history is rooted in the idea that such histories better explain that society’s categories of thinking – for instance how they view political power or the cosmos. This call was partly in response to subjective colonial-era histories either knowingly or unknowingly constrained by a colonialist discourse, and partly from the need for the previously oppressed and colonized to speak for themselves. However, as demonstrated by the Nepalese nationalist interpretations of 1767, histories written by the colonized or local can be just as subjective as colonialist ones.

Moreover, emic histories can and have been appropriated by colonialist historians attempting to legitimize their own representations with an Indian voice. As Gyan Prakash describes it, ‘privileging the writings of historians from third world origins... renders such scholars to “native informants” whose discourse is opened up to further disquisitions of how “they” think of “their” history’.³¹ An example of this can be found by returning to the example of Kirkpatrick’s mission to Nepal. According to Kirkpatrick, the practice of history in Nepal is ‘without authentic records’ and ‘clouded by mythological fables’. The colonial observer does include a Nepalese historical voice, only to demonstrate this falsity – Prithvi Narayan’s conquest is narrated to Kirkpatrick by his grandson, King Rana Bahadur Shah. Kirkpatrick then casts doubt over Rana Bahadur Shah’s assertion that the people of Kathmandu rallied to support Prithvi Narayan’s soldiers.³² The recited narrative is considered either incorrect, or a deliberate lie. Neither of these scenarios reflect well on the Nepalese historical method. Thus, the colonialist’s usage of a ‘native informant’ only consolidates the colonialist’s representation of the South Asian subject.

The futility of possessiveness when it comes to *who* writes *whose* history is that ultimately the historian needs to identify the potential frameworks that have influenced others in their position and may well be influencing themselves, regardless of whether they are writing as a cultural ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’. Whilst a European historian needs to acknowledge the discourse of orientalism that may influence their knowledge of Nepal, the Nepalese historian must recognize how the program of nationalist censorship may shape their own interpretation. Said’s eloquent thoughts on Western history writing resonate:

³⁰ Burghart, ‘The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal’, p.101.

³¹ Gyan Prakash, ‘Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian History’, in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, p.163.

³² B.L. IOR/H/395 Memoir of Nepal by Captain William Kirkpatrick, 1798.

‘there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation.’³³ Moreover, it is difficult to establish who has a monopoly of understanding the perceptions and thought processes of a villager who encountered the EIC expedition, 250 years ago. If it is taken that a Nepalese writer is in a better position to research that history than a foreign writer, then in turn a writer from the Sindhuli district would be better placed than one in Kathmandu. Taken to its logical conclusion, the *right to write* would be the possession of a minute number.

Sarkar’s critique, that etic histories would use a colonial archive out of convenience at the expense of originality, is a valid one given that the primary source for this study – Kinloch’s journal - is indeed an English language source. However, this is not a choice of convenience. It is the only day-by-day account of the expedition available and the only written record of these encounters. Nevertheless, an encounter is by definition something that generates multiple experiences, and its ramifications cannot be explained solely through one perspective. Moreover, Kinloch’s journal may be a more thorough record than the few contemporary Nepalese sources, but still incurs extensive questions of reliability. The nuances of using a colonial archive, and the Nepalese sources available to counterbalance this, are discussed in more depth shortly. This thesis treads a line between emic and etic, so that the colonial, English language sources are used more critically, and less exclusively, than Sarkar’s assertion would allow.

II:2 Navigating Terminologies and the Subalternist Approach

This thesis tries to recover the previously neglected agency of marginalized characters through a close reading of Kinloch’s expeditionary journal alongside other colonial and Nepalese sources. That agency, and its neglect, is the foundation for each specific encounter discussed. However, what exactly constitutes ‘agency,’ the reasons for its neglect, and the consequent marginalization of each character’s historical role, differ. It could be due to assumptions made about their South Asian identity, or the locality they occupy. It could be their peripheral relationship to the political centre, or their subaltern identity. These designations are not symbiotic, and their usage incurs historiographical debates that need to be addressed.

³³ Said, *Orientalism*, p.xiv.

‘Agency’ as a mass noun according to the Oxford English Dictionary is an ‘action or intervention producing a particular affect,’ whilst an ‘agent’ is ‘a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect’.³⁴ Taking such rigid definitions however obscures the complexity of their use in historical analysis. For that reason, a couple of amendments and clarifications on their parameters are required.

In the context of colonial South Asia there are both individuals and groups of people whose ability to complete an ‘action or intervention,’ or to ‘take an active role,’ has been denied within historical accounts, since their actions were recorded with far less frequency than their colonizer counterparts. Moreover, through the British colonialist lens, the South Asian historical subject was apolitical and apathetic, incapable of aspiring to a ‘particular affect,’ and thus in need of a guiding hand by colonialism. At the same time, South Asian Hindu agency was considered shackled to a despotic religious order. Ronald Inden argued that according to colonial discourse, ‘people of India are not even partially autonomous agents. They do not shape and reshape their world. Rather they are the patients of that which makes them Indian – the social, material reality of caste.’³⁵ Therefore, recognition of South Asian agency within colonial sources has been hindered by the insistence that the South Asian mind had limited capacity for it, being restricted by South Asian society and religion. Conversely, both the agency of British historical subject, and their ability to erase that of the South Asian, is clear within colonial sources.³⁶ It is therefore submitted that the practices of recording action and outcome within the colonial encounter, combined with the rigid Oxford Dictionary definition, obscures agency of behalf of the colonized.

There are forms of agency that do not involve an ‘active role,’ or an ‘intervention.’ The agent may choose precisely not to complete an action, and thus the recording of their agency, not being described unless notably for the lack of action, is neglected. However, James Scott has demonstrated how significant that choice could be in contributing towards colonial resistance or collaboration in his outstanding book, *Weapons of the Weak*. Examples of such non-active resistance in Scott’s book, which collectively worked to undermine invasive capitalist agricultural practices in a rural Malaysian community, included reporting as unable to work for barely plausible reasons, claiming tools had been lost or stolen, non-attendance or non-compliance through tardiness or a slow work rate.³⁷ This form of agency

³⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Agency’, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/agency> [Accessed 12th February 2019]. ‘Agent’ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/agent> [Accessed 12th February 2019].

³⁵ Inden, ‘Orientalist Constructions’, p.428.

³⁶ Jon Wilson, ‘Agency, Narrative, and Resistance’, in Sarah Stockwell, ed., *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), p.256.

³⁷ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp.241-255.

is repeated throughout the 1767 encounter and those that followed, therefore the thesis broadens the Oxford National Dictionary's definition by including 'inactive agency,' the choice not to complete an action or intervention, within its remit.

Having broadened the definition of 'agency' there remains inherent historiographical problems in attempting to recover agency on behalf of the marginalized agent. The first is the notion that the person or thing, the agent, is desiring a 'specified effect'. Historians attempting to evaluate the extent of agency cannot do so by identifying the effect of an action, then allocating the desire for this effect to a historical subject, and arguing that the individual therefore had a significant importance as the architect of that desired effect. This is because there is very rarely an assertion by the individual within the archive that they held that desire. Such an argument is more indicative of how the historian wants the historical subject to be perceived. In a South Asian context this has often been associated with an intent to advocate for specific disenfranchised and marginalized groups, 'projecting political fantasies' onto those subjects.³⁸ To assume agency without investigation is therefore similar in its essentialism to the colonial orientalist discourse, and represents a misunderstanding of colonialism as a material and psychological force in which individuals were deprived of power, leading them to feel powerless, passive or silent. Indeed, Jon Wilson has argued that, if historians writing about marginalized historical agency intend to restore the humanity of individual subjects, a lack of agency can be just as important a part of being human as having it.³⁹ The difference however is that in the past this lack of agency has been stated as categorical fact, whereas the opposite, that marginalized characters might be active in the course of events, has not.

The response to these challenges can no longer be to avoid the study of marginalized agency. Certainly, the deprivation of power and exercise of control occurred within the colonial experience, to the extent that historical subjects may have felt powerless, but that lack of agency should not be presumed. This thesis therefore highlights historical instances in which agency has been denied, then demonstrates ways in which the action or inaction of certain historical agents whose influence has previously been neglected had specified effects. However, it is not subsequently argued that the historical agent exercising agency does so with that specified effect in mind – their agenda is not presupposed. Potential motives and causal factors are certainly posited, but are rarely done so with certainty.

³⁸ Wilson, 'Agency, Narrative, and Resistance', p.255.

³⁹ Ibid., p.265.

The term 'indigenous' also requires clarification. The key difficulty is what constitutes it: how long a people need to have occupied a space to be called 'indigenous'. This is problematic in that it operates as a blanket term for all non-European historical agents, endowing the essentialized 'colonized subject' with a fixed narrative of long-term residency in the space that they are indigenous to. In a South Asian context, no such generalization can be made. Throughout history, peoples frequently migrated throughout the Himalayas, and charting them is difficult. Who is indigenous to what space can become highly politicized, setting up a hegemony of one specific group in a region, which has likewise been said of the term 'native'.⁴⁰ The connotation of the 'indigenous' likewise reinforces a juxtaposition of the passive, static and homogenous colonial subject versus the active, travelled colonizer of various European nationalities, which does not adequately reflect South Asian mobility and global contact: 'historians wanting to recover "native agency" often consequently assume that these places do not have mobile cultures – that unlike Europe, Asia and Africa are full of 'indigenous people'.⁴¹ For that reason, this thesis prefers to use regional identities: Bengali, Nepalese, Gorkhali, Tibetan, Indian, or South Asian if these more specific designations are either unknown or too narrow. It is after all their South Asian identity and ethnicity, rather than the duration that they have lived in South Asia or the extent to which they could be called 'indigenous,' that has marginalized these historical agents.

By extension the 'local' is used to identify when a person lives, or has lived, in the specific area between India and Nepal (in Kinloch's journal, this is not overt though there are identifiers - whether they are working there, and if that labour is permanent instead of seasonal, or whether they are living there permanently.) In many instances, we do not know much about the 'local'. However, we can learn a lot of context for specific villages by statistical analysis – the social composition, population, occupations, tax yield and wealth can all be assessed in comparison to previous years and other places. 'Local' can also be the scale on which they politically, culturally or financially operate. So, a grain merchant may be described as 'local,' if his business is restricted to a small area of northern Bihar.

The 'local' can also be described as 'peripheral,' but it is not the same. By all means the spaces in which many of the encounters studied take place are geographically 'peripheral' to the political centres of Kathmandu and Calcutta, yet a character can be described as 'peripheral' to these centres for reasons other than geography - they may frequently visit Patna, such as the guide Ram Das who provided Kinloch with information.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.256.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.263-4.

They would therefore quite often have a close proximity to the ‘physical’ centre. However, they did not have any official authority or role in that place. Alternatively, a Company official, such as Edward Golding at the EIC’s Bettiah outpost who first received the Malla request for intervention, may physically be far away from Calcutta, but are certainly less ‘peripheral’ in terms of official colonial status than Ram Das, travelling across Bengal reliant on alms. ‘Peripheral’ in this thesis therefore designates the lack of an official, recorded, relationship of influence at the political centres of Calcutta and Kathmandu. However, it must be remembered that this thesis specifically challenges that definition, arguing that the ‘peripheral,’ could still occupy such an influential position. ‘Peripheral’ identifiers may be their absence within official records or their occupation. This conceptual definition of ‘peripheral’ rather than a territorial or spatial one has drawn inspiration from Marsden and Hopkins’ employment of the term ‘Frontier’ to denote ‘not a bounded tract of territory but a space – part conceptual, part physical’.⁴² They explored different connotations of *sarhad* – the ‘frontier’ – and *sarhadi* – a ‘frontier person’ – in Afghanistan. The terms assumed different meanings in different contexts, at different times providing a distinction between ‘upland’ and ‘lowland,’ ‘urban’ and ‘civilised’.⁴³

The most problematic of all these terms is the concept of ‘the subaltern’. As guidance, this thesis considers the debates surrounding the Subaltern Studies Collective, in order to identify what exactly constitutes the ‘subaltern.’ There has been disagreement over this: the original ‘Subaltern Manifesto’ laid down by Ranajit Guha held a Gramscian-Marxist agenda. Some marxist historians have consequently argued that since then, the Subaltern Studies project had lost its way: ‘The absorption of Said’s *Orientalism* at the expense of theorists like E.P. Thompson encouraged a turn to textual, rather than social analysis, and these were texts which, by their nature, had primarily been written not by subalterns but by elites. Subaltern Studies ‘had begun to leave the subaltern out’.⁴⁴ Critics on these grounds have mostly advocated returning to the original agenda. Sumit Sarkar for instance wrote that the way forward was to revisit E.P. Thompson’s work, stressing local resistance to hegemony through the appropriation of elements of it and through the pockets that remained free of foreign penetration.⁴⁵ Others, such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, have defended Subaltern Studies by arguing it was primarily a postcolonial project, and that

⁴² Benjamin Hopkins, Magnus Marsden, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst & Co, 2011), p.8.

⁴³ Ibid., p.8.

⁴⁴ Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, ‘“The Making of the Working Class”: E.P. Thompson and Indian History’, in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, p.65.

⁴⁵ Sarkar, ‘Orientalism Revisited’, p.252.

‘the subaltern’ is not necessarily always the rural poor.⁴⁶ Gayatri Spivak likewise had an astute response: ‘Subaltern studies considers the bottom layer of society, not necessarily put together by capital logic alone. This is the theoretical difference from Marxism.’⁴⁷

If not their relationship to the means of production, what rendered a person ‘subaltern?’ If we take it to mean ‘the bottom layer of society,’ an individual could occupy that layer as result of gender, poverty, occupation, class, and so on. Given such inherent variation, some historians find this definition of ‘subaltern’ guilty of homogenizing language in its discussion of subaltern political consciousness – this critique was levelled at the work of Ashis Nandy, who in trying to define the subaltern was accused of ‘generalizing the cultural experience of the Bengali Literati to that of the whole nation’.⁴⁸

This thesis does not consider ‘subaltern’ a synonym for ‘working class’. Nor does it homogenize the subaltern within Kinloch’s journal. Instead, it interprets ‘subaltern’ as a relational concept. This idea is drawn from the work of Crispin Bates, who wrote that ‘the term “subaltern” does not simply connote the poor and the wretched, but all those placed in relations of subordination and domination to superordinate classes’.⁴⁹ This allows for an appreciation of the diversity within the subaltern - though all subaltern subjects have that subordination in common, they may also be subordinate to each other, or have differing relationships with the political elite. This is the case within the 1767 expedition, which as we shall see is a showcase for subaltern heterogeneity. Take for example the village of Janakpur that the expedition marched through. The villagers fled to the local countryside days before Kinloch’s arrival. Whilst all the villagers resided in the same geographical space, and were subordinate to their local headman, some were then chosen to return and speak to Kinloch, whilst others were not. Defining subaltern as a relational concept also ensures it does not charter a homogenized subaltern mindset, or attempt a collective community consciousness in the regions Kinloch travels through – on the contrary, at times it charts differences in consciousness within a community not always opposed to elite rule, as Ranajit Guha insisted. For example, Kinloch postulated that the villagers fled Janakpur not out of fear, but to buy time whilst such differences of opinion within the community were being settled.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography’, *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1:1 (2000), p.10.

⁴⁷ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview’, in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, p.324.

⁴⁸ Rosalind O’Hanlon and David Washbrook, ‘After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism and Politics in the Third World’, in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, pp.195-197.

⁴⁹ Bates, *Subalterns and Raj*, p.4.

⁵⁰ Raj, *Expedition*, p.44.

It is important to note that EIC expeditions did meet local or peripheral characters whose agency has been marginalized, that can only tenuously be described as ‘subaltern’. A case in point would be the local grain merchant Dondao Chaudhuri that Kinloch met in 1767. He was known to the Raja of Patna, and to Kinloch’s superiors. He also would have commanded local labour, and would have been comparatively wealthy. So, whilst he was geographically peripheral in the same way a *ryot* in the area was, he was certainly less politically peripheral, and he was not ‘working-class’.⁵¹ To call him subaltern, either with an original, marxist definition or because of his social hierarchal layer, seems unsubstantiated. And yet, unlike the superordinate figures of Shah and Kinloch, the grain merchant does not speak for himself within the archive: his words are only ever paraphrased by others. Despite his comparative wealth or political links, he has still been marginalized because of his local, Bengali identity. Therefore, he is not bound to the subaltern by a shared relationship to the modes of production, or a social identity, but he does occupy a similar position in his subordination to others, and an inability to speak for himself in the source base. A historical investigation into the 1767 expedition that concentrates on marginalized characters such as the grain merchant is therefore required, regardless of whether they neatly fit into original conceptualisations of the subaltern, if only to restore them as historical agents alongside Kinloch and Shah.

II:3 Contributions from Borderlands Studies

Having critiqued colonialist and nationalist discourse in previous interpretations and identified the subaltern, marginalized character, this thesis then attributes involvement in previously neglected networks and political concerns to various agents. These alternative interpretations are drawn in part from the subaltern approach previously outlined, and in part from recent studies on borderlands. Whilst area-studies of South Asia and Central Asia have omitted Nepal (and to a similar extent, Tibet) as aforementioned, nation-state and colonial-state histories have likewise omitted narratives from the periphery and the colonised respectively. The study of the spaces in between these areas and nations offers an opportunity to move away these pitfalls, towards what have been labelled ‘connected histories.’ This was a term coined by Sanjay Subrahmanyam in a rejection of ‘the binary between discrete geographical and cultural monoliths such as Europe and Asia, set up by a

⁵¹ A *ryot* was a cultivator, often a tenant. See the glossary.

great many comparative studies'.⁵² In a 1767 context, once the borderlands periphery of the lower foothills is considered alongside the centres of Kathmandu and Calcutta, the implications of different networks of languages, trade, family, political and cultural ties for Anglo-Nepalese relations become more visible.

Recently, Indrani Chatterjee has voiced scepticism unto whether this is possible in the Tibetan-Nepalese-Bengali borderlands, owing to the extent of disconnected histories written over the long *durée*, which make pre-colonial connected spaces very difficult to map.⁵³ Chatterjee listed many connected histories that had previously been unread, including the sovereignty of the Mallas of Patan over the town of Jumla in the Karnali zone.⁵⁴ Disconnected histories of the colonial era 'embraced ideals of androcentric and absolutist sovereignty, of tribalism and territoriality. But they disregarded all evidence to the contrary'.⁵⁵ It is the intention of this thesis to recognise such connections in its reinterpretation of 1767, by drawing upon the innovative ideas and approaches of existing South Asian borderlands studies.

Zomia was a term used by Willem van Schendel to designate a geographical upland region, although there have been historians writing about the non-state people residing there *avant la lettre*.⁵⁶ Van Schendel originally deployed Zomia as an attack on area studies, on the grounds that they often neglected the margins. His argument was geographically calculated – van Schendel's Zomia intersected the peripheries of Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia and East Asia.⁵⁷ Sara Shneiderman then argued for Nepal's inclusion.⁵⁸ This was then expanded upon by James Scott, who argued that Zomians perfected 'the art of not-being governed,' a form of resistance to colonial or postcolonial annexation characterized by flight, transportation of resources and an unstable, flexible cultural identity that withstood attempts at hegemony from the colonial or postcolonial nation-state.⁵⁹

The direct application of Zomia to this thesis is problematic: firstly, the term creates a new area studies, in which a centre is designated and essentialist characteristics are

⁵² Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'One Asia or Many? Reflections from a Connected History', *Modern Asian Studies*, 50:1 (2016) 5-43. Quoted in Indrani Chatterjee, 'Connected Histories and the Dream of Decolonial History', *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 41:1 (2018) p.69.

⁵³ Chatterjee, 'Connected Histories', p.71.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.79.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.86.

⁵⁶ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (London: Yale University Press, 2014) p.14.

⁵⁷ Willem van Schendel, 'Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20:6 (2002), 647-68.

⁵⁸ Sara Shneiderman, 'Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some scholarly and political considerations across time and space', *The Journal of Global History*, 5:2 (2010), p.290.

⁵⁹ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

drawn up. This consequently attributes Scott's Zomian 'art' to all societies within the Himalayas: non-state, isolationist and evasive. It then imposes the geographical boundaries of Zomia, creates a binary divide between Zomian and Non-Zomian, and fails to appreciate the complex weaving of networks and interaction between different areas. Jelle Wouters led this critique with an examination of ways in which hill-tribes opposed colonial governance yet maintained a dependency on trade and interaction with the plains. They argued it was simply impossible in the barren hills to cut off the state absolutely.⁶⁰ To neglect such fundamental links, for example those between Makwanpur and Awadh that led to Mughal intervention in 1763, incurs the risk that Himalayan polities like Nepal are once more excluded from South Asian historical developments.⁶¹ Secondly, whilst some marginalized characters did at times practice what Scott has called the 'art of not being governed,' such as flight from a locality, they also practiced a direct, belligerent resistance, such as the staunch defence of a key geographical feature. In 1767, there were examples of both these forms: the evacuation of villagers from Janakpur, and the defence of the pass beyond Sindhuli Gadhi.⁶² Furthermore, the marginalized groups on the border between eighteenth-century Bengal and Kathmandu are not what the prominent Zomian theorists van Schendel, Scott, or Sara Shneiderman would call a quintessential Zomian group: middle-to-high altitude cultivators, who supplement their diet with foraged forest products and who maintain a high level of mobility, a relatively egalitarian social structure, and a synthetic, exclusively oral religious tradition.⁶³ There is likewise a problem with Scott's quintessential colonial-valley state. Its key characteristics included the threat to Zomians of occupation and land annexation. However, the annexation of Nepal was neither a key EIC objective, nor long-term goal, behind eighteenth-century expeditions into the foothills.⁶⁴

Zomia, when augmented by Scott's 'art', is best considered not as a replacement for Central Asia Studies or South Asia Studies, but an inversion of traditional centres and peripheries that focuses on the resistance of non-state, tribal groups to EIC and Gorkhali intervention, rather than the degree of success with which centralist, colonial or post-colonial nation-state policy and control was implemented. This escapes the trappings of nation-state histories, for example prioritizing the political relationship between Nepal and the EIC, and instead sheds light on alternative political and socio-economic concerns that are considered in the locality but stretch across the Himalayas, which could have influenced

⁶⁰ Jelle J.P. Wouters, 'Keeping the Hill Tribes at Bay: A Critique from India's Northeast of James C. Scott's Paradigm of State Evasion', *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 39 (2011), p.42.

⁶¹ This Mughal intervention is detailed in chapter III.

⁶² They are discussed in more detail in chapter IV.

⁶³ Shneiderman, 'Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia?', p.292.

⁶⁴ Such potential objectives are discussed in more depth in chapter III.

the colonial enterprise. Similarly, we should by no means accept Scott's paradigm for resistance uncritically but could nevertheless consider forms of resistance on behalf of the people residing in this borderlands space, regardless of whether they match Scott's Zomian attributes.

One writer who has achieved such an inversion is Chitralekha Zutshi. Her rethinking of Kashmiri history represented a shift from a traditional focus on border disputes and clashes away from Delhi and Karachi, and instead considered Srinagar as the industrialized pivot for wider trade networks and imperial expansion throughout history.⁶⁵ Zutshi's work is particularly significant for this thesis, given the nationalist and colonialist historiographical tradition that the region has been subjected to. As previously mentioned, Zutshi drew attention to ways in which a series of orientalist projects, 'aimed at unearthing Kashmir's Sanskrit texts and through them its classical past', had by the nineteenth century attributed a specific author and date to the *Rajatarangini*, relegating alternative, Persian narrative traditions.⁶⁶ Later, at the turn of the twentieth century, *Rajatarangini* was translated and appropriated by Bengali writers, 'as a national text by claiming Kashmir's past as a reflection of the grand narrative of Indian history.'⁶⁷ Zutshi recognised these projects, and in tracing their developments, hoped to credit the 'complex networks through which indigenous Kashmiri, orientalist and nationalist ideas interacted with and influenced each other.'⁶⁸ Her book subsequently explores the different historical agents involved in this process, as they advocated their own readings of the *Rajatarangini*, and made accommodations for those of others. The production of colonial knowledge on Nepal within the series of encounters studied in this thesis can be considered likewise: Francis Buchanan-Hamilton's *Account of Nepal* for instance can be described as an intellectual encounter between himself and the many informants who he consulted.⁶⁹

Alternative lines of enquiry are similarly observable in the works of Benjamin Hopkins and Magnus Marsden, notably within Hopkins' *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* and their co-authored *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier*.⁷⁰ Their lamentations on existing historical writing chime with the observations made in chapter I: 'this is a space that has been shaped powerfully by a poorly understood colonial legacy, as well as invisible histories

⁶⁵ Chitralekha Zutshi, 'Rethinking Kashmir's History from a Borderlands Perspective', *History Compass*, 8:7 (2010), 594-608.

⁶⁶ Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*, p.185.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.195.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.186.

⁶⁹ This is discussed further in chapter VI.

⁷⁰ Benjamin Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and Benjamin Hopkins, Magnus Marsden, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2011).

of everyday movement that are rarely the focus of scholarship'.⁷¹ The focus on mobility is particularly poignant. Within *Fragments*, Marsden and Hopkins wrote that 'mobility has been a key feature of life on the frontier, with its inhabitants employing movement as a strategy of survival and response to political pressure, as well as economic opportunism'.⁷² Similar strategies are subsequently observed within chapter IV of this thesis, as Kinloch travelled through tracts of land either abandoned or occupied according to significant local changes in tax or security, and different migrants, singular or within a group, either avoided or sought out the expedition, seeking either opportunity or confrontation.

It is further noticeable within this example that Marsden and Hopkins recognised mobility as a response to economic opportunism, rejecting any vision of South Asian uplands as spaces exclusively populated by state-evading peoples. Writing on anthropological contributions like those of Scott and van Schendel, they wrote that 'such images of disjuncture and marginality are problematic as they obscure ways in which the Frontier was, and is, not only a space of uncontrolled freedom, but also one that binds, connects and thus helps to forge powerful forms of solidarity, community and collective identity that endure across space and time'.⁷³ Marsden and Hopkins thus contested the understanding of the frontier as a 'non-place,' and as a 'chaotic buffer zone'.⁷⁴ A similar critique can be made of the Nepalese-Indian borderlands of the Madhesh, when viewed solely as a discontented space with competing interests between different ethnic groups. Nor did they assume characteristics across the varied groups within the borderland: 'central to our study is the acknowledgement that the frontier's inhabitants are not now, nor have they been, a homogenous group occupying a singular space'.⁷⁵ Instead, they tread new ground between the non-state, disintegrated model of Scott, essentialising, simplistic model of one single 'frontier people' on the other. They ultimately call for 'a greater recognition of the underlying dynamics and constantly evolving ties that simultaneously draw the Frontier's spaces and fragments together, and also pull them apart'.⁷⁶ This is relevant to territories of the Nepalese hill-states, such as Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Patan, and Gorkha. Though they were linked by trade, religion, and sovereignty amongst other factors, these linkages shifted, straining, breaking, mending and strengthening without rhythm.

There are some recent contributions to Border Studies that focus on eighteenth-century Nepalese local histories, from which ideas and interpretations can be applied.

⁷¹ Hopkins and Marsden, *Fragments*, p.2.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p.4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.5.

Within a special journal issue on borderlands in South Asia, Vashuda Pande provided a survey of Kumaon as a trans-Himalayan borderland over the *long durée*. This encompassed some discussion on the region from 1767 until the end of the Anglo-Nepalese War. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Kumaon occupied a pivotal crossroads position: in a borderlands space between the Sikh Empire and the Gorkha Empire, Kumaon was connected to both via a well serviced east-west road.⁷⁷ It had moreover shared a long history of exchange and interaction with Tibet, via an agricultural-pastoral network that involved the sharing of different habitats and resources (grain and salt) according to the seasons, and the movement of different groups through different ecological niches. Although physically not demarcated, the boundaries between these groups were maintained through a framework of ritual practices, customary rites and rights.⁷⁸

Pande's contribution is particularly significant for the study of Anglo-Nepalese encounters in its exploration of the trans-Himalayan salt trade, and changing trajectories of communication and commerce. As will be seen in chapter V, the violation of traditional borderlands networks surrounding the salt trade played a part in the Nepalese-Tibetan war, which consequently saw an EIC expedition reach Nepal Valley. Pande also demonstrated ways in which any breakdown or shift in the orientation of these networks could pose a challenge to colonial authorities, shaping colonial endeavours in Kumaon, and other Himalayan borderlands such as the Tarai, for years to come. In 1815, Kumaon was ceded by Nepal to the EIC. However, Pande demonstrated how those existing networks made it difficult for the EIC to consolidate its new territory. No commercially viable routes had been developed to link this region with its possessions in the south, and the recent Anglo-Nepalese War had led to a rise of banditry in the Tarai.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the severing from Kathmandu placed a new impetus on the well-established trans-Himalayan trade – the opposite direction to which the EIC hoped commerce would flow.⁸⁰ Moreover, Gorkhali monetary tax demands during Shah rule had indebted many local ethnic *Bhotia* traders more used to a barter economy to the local elite in Almora – forging an internal link that the EIC would struggle to break. For example, it was noted in 1815 that those *Bhotias* were more likely to purchase Company goods such as cloth through established Almora middlemen, excluding the EIC from the trade of salt, despite their best efforts to sell directly.⁸¹ The complexities of borderlands networks therefore could cement ties between local

⁷⁷ Vashuda Pande, 'Borderlands, Empires and Nations', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 52:15 (2017), p.68.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.69.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.70.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.71.

⁸¹ Observed by George Rutherford at Kashipur, in Pande, 'Borderlands', p.71.

marginalized agents, either *Bhotias* in Kumaon or Madhes in the Tarai, and local elites in either Makwanpur, Gorkha or Almora.

Pande's *long durée* study concludes with British dominion over the region, as networks of roads, a massive cartographic exercise and military force in Tibet smothered Kumaon within the imperial fold.⁸² Pande nevertheless demonstrates ways in which local people could 'modify state policies and borders through their responses to marking and maintaining boundaries'.⁸³ As will be seen in chapters V and VI, such local responses in 1767 and in subsequent expeditions had ramifications for wider EIC Himalayan policies and agendas.

Finally, Graham Clarke's reflections on the relationships between Himalayan state in the late eighteenth century draw attention to the different linkages between borderlands states. Clarke identified urban foci either astride hilltops (as was the case with Gorkha) or in the valleys (Kathmandu.) These occupied critical north-south or east-west crossroads.⁸⁴ The aforementioned Kumaon town of Almora is a further example. As waypoints, these centres became culturally significant not solely for its residents, but those travelling through. So, whilst elite, political relations were maintained by war, marriage and treaties, these networks also maintained the capacity to create cultural and religious corridors, linking different 'borderlands' states across a much wider area. The same communities could be politically divided and religiously bound simultaneously. Whilst Clarke asserted that 'at a popular level there was an absence of any general, wider solidary political sentiment,' local authority was nevertheless invested in the inheritance and curation of ceremonial and ritual sites.⁸⁵ As this authority changed hands between Gorkha, Kathmandu and Tibet, so too did local allegiances. This is significant for a study of Anglo-Nepalese encounters, since an EIC observer solely describing the political could miss vital networks of loyalty. For example, Kinloch remarked whilst travelling the lower foothills that the residents 'all profess the Hindoo religion, but I believe they know little of any other deity but Beem Sing'.⁸⁶ The deity 'Beem Sing' whom Kinloch described was Bhima in Hindu mythology, also written Bhimsen, the patron deity of traders in Nepal, who made a journey of pilgrimage into the Himalayas. As Kinloch continues into the foothills, it becomes apparent that such a religious corridor existed through the popularity of this figure from

⁸² Pande, 'Borderlands', p.77.

⁸³ Ibid., p.68.

⁸⁴ Graham Clarke, 'Blood and Territory as Idioms of National Identity in Himalayan States', *Kailash*, 17:3/4 (2010), p.97.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.101.

⁸⁶ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal of Capt. George Kinloch, 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 6b.

the Tarai up to within a few days' march of Kathmandu, manifest in dedicated shrines and exclusive worship.

II:4 Source Critique I: Kinloch's Journal

The key reading for this study is the expedition journal of Captain Kinloch. This includes daily entries from 26 August to 17 October, 1767. For the most part Kinloch wrote at the end of the day, recording the weather, distance and direction travelled, terrain, and events he believed noteworthy. It is a highly useful tool as the only such day-by-day account of the expedition. However, its provenance requires consideration and acknowledgement.

There are two extant copies of Kinloch's journal, both found within the British Library. The first is part of the Sutton Court collection, split between two notebooks of 30 folios.⁸⁷ The second is a mid-nineteenth century copy, inscribed with a private buyer's name – J. Skerslake. This version also has a post-script, speculating on the fate of the expedition, signed by J. Davies.⁸⁸ The content of the two versions does not differ significantly and the later copy is more or less faithful to the original text, with a few abbreviations. They both cut out at exactly the same point, on the 17th October. Both texts can be read alongside each other thanks to the excellent work of Yogesh Raj, who transcribed them, highlighting the instances where the second copy deviates, for the benefit of Nepalese historians who have only had access to sources from Prithvi Narayan Shah's correspondence.⁸⁹

The first copy appears to have been written by Kinloch himself – other writers within the EIC had clerks, but not necessarily whilst they were in the field. This journal is written in the first person, and the handwriting is similar to that of his will, written 1 August 1767, and a letter of his to the select committee earlier in the year.⁹⁰ The handwriting changes within the second notebook, becoming less legible. Perhaps this was a reflection on Kinloch's deteriorating health, as food shortages and fever set in. It is less clear who wrote the second copy, presumably someone who had access to the military archive, or Kinloch's personal items, since it is a near perfect transcription. The post-script by J. Davies is in a different hand to the rest of the text so it is unlikely that they were the original author, yet the speculation it contains suggests they did have some knowledge of

⁸⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal of Capt. George Kinloch on the expedition to Nepal.

⁸⁸ B.L. Add MS 16633 Journal of Captain George Kinloch, on the expedition to Napaul, begun the 26th August 1767.

⁸⁹ Raj, *Expedition*, p.3.

⁹⁰ References B.L. IOR/P/154/53 p.68a, and B.L. IOR/P/A/8 respectively from the Bengal Proceedings.

the expedition. It is almost impossible to know whether J. Davies was the owner before or after it came into the possession of J. Skerslake, whose name is inscribed on it.

Although Kinloch's purpose for writing and audience is not directly stated, it is unlikely that Kinloch intended to publish his journal as a memoir, in what was then a burgeoning market for travel literature soon to be transformed by the publication of Cook's voyages.⁹¹ If we compare the content of Kinloch's journal to another from within the EIC archives that was written after Cook's voyages, and the emergence of literary travel writing as a popular genre, it is apparent such a public audience was not on his mind. Captain Walter Lennon's *Journal of an Expedition to the Molucca Islands* is one such text, undertaken in 1795 but later published for public consumption. Whereas Kinloch was engaged noting the terrain and provisions, Lennon made observations on whether or not a Dutch governor's wife was dressed too scantily.⁹² A further comparison could be the example of Donald Campbell, who travelled to India in 1781, and like Kinloch was a military Company official. First arriving in Bombay, he was shipwrecked near Goa en route to Madras, and imprisoned by Hyder Ali. He was released in order to negotiate with Warren Hastings, travelling extensively overland between Madras and Ali's Kingdom. His account of this, entitled *A Journey Over Land to India*, is vastly different in its publication history and format to Kinloch's journal: it constituted a series of letters to his son, and was published in 1796, years after his time in India.⁹³ Instead of this body of literary travel writing, epistolary form or otherwise, Kinloch's journal bears more resemblance to the conventional 'report' or 'relation' in which, upon advice of the Royal Society, journals combined a chronological narrative with topographical descriptions.⁹⁴ It is remarkably similar in form to the journals of his contemporary Hudson's Bay Company 'winterers,' for instance those of Anthony Henday in 1755, or William Tomison in 1769.⁹⁵ This perhaps reflects the criteria requested of them by their trading company employers, although of course Kinloch occupied a military position that reflected the EIC's militarization.

Nevertheless, the travel literature Kinloch read could still have a bearing on how he wrote, and the diaries are not entirely bereft of literary flourish: for instance, the duration of his hardships becomes a running account and dramatic device, concluding with the

⁹¹ Elizabeth Bohls and Ian Duncan, eds, *Travel Writing 1700-1830, an Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.xv.

⁹² B.L. IOR/H/441, *Journal of an Expedition to the Molucca Islands* (1795-1796).

⁹³ Donald Campbell, *A Journey Overland to India by Donald Campbell, 1781* (London: Cullen & Co, 1795).

⁹⁴ Bohls and Duncan, eds, *Travel Writing*, p.xxiii.

⁹⁵ Anthony Henday, 'Texts' in Belyea, Barbara, ed., *A Year Inland: The Journal of a Hudson's Bay Company Winterer* (Ontario, 2000); Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, B.239/a/64, William Tomison: *Journal*, 1769-1770.

‘thirteenth day of the famine’.⁹⁶ A consideration of soldier’s and officer’s reading habits, and the dissemination of literature around the world, is useful here. Such a consideration is made possible by the online *Reading Experience Database*, which catalogues who read which books, and where, throughout history. From this resource we are able to observe the reading practices of other EIC officials, such as John Drummond Erskine, a Company writer who owned copies of *Grammar of the Persian Language*, as well as *A History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol*, which he annotated.⁹⁷ These resources are used with the acknowledgement that there are many, many variables in books an individual might have read, EIC employment being just one of them, and that without a list of Kinloch’s possessions, or notes from himself on the subject, we cannot be sure which texts he had read personally.

It is most likely that this was a diary to be presented to Kinloch’s superiors. Unfortunately, there is no evidence within the India Office Records of his being instructed to do so. But he may well have done this for his own sake – a diary, written as a reflection at the end of each day, is an opportunity for himself to shape his own role, covering any malpractice or highlighting his own successes. The structure and content are certainly indicative of a conventional military report from the time: Kinloch’s daily observations are strikingly similar to those recorded by other expedition commanders in the mid-eighteenth century, compiled in a manuscript within the British Library by an official called C.W. Mallet, for the attention of Warren Hastings. These reports consistently observe the condition of the road, as good or bad, dry or sandy, with further notes on distance travelled, whose territory the expedition travelled through, whether there is water supply, or the condition of the villages.⁹⁸ Although not as thorough as this collection of itineraries, Kinloch would try to contribute this information to the best of his knowledge. The idea that this was strictly a military account is furthermore supported by the absence of any address to the reader – unlike in other private diaries and letters found within the archive. The letters of Major James Rennell for instance, which often featured illustrative accounts of the Himalayan foothills due to the time he spent there in his role as a cartographic surveyor, were specifically for the use of friends in Britain and as such are often engaged in a direct dialogue with that readership.⁹⁹ No such dialogue exists in Kinloch’s journal.

⁹⁶ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 16th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 30b.

⁹⁷ Dunimarle Library [DH LIB 518], Francois Bernier, *The history of the late revolution of the empire of the Great Mogol*, UK Reading Experience Database, [6958](#), accessed: 19 May 2016

⁹⁸ B.L. Add MS 29216 Itineraries of journeys from Surat to Cawnpore, 12 March- 28 July, 1785, and from Bombay to Poona, including a journey to the Mahratta army when besieging Buddammee, 12 February - 6 June, 1786.

⁹⁹ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, 1758-1785.

Moreover, Kinloch as the commanding officer was perhaps more duty bound to provide a written account (no such record exists for the other EIC officers, and their experience is regrettably far less retrievable.) This raises the alternative possibility that the journal in its extant form was not written in the field but instead was prepared as a summary of the expedition, and a defence of the writer's own conduct therein, composed either from memory or an original set of field notes now lost. This is certainly plausible – there are entries wherein Kinloch in the midst of disaster and turmoil has written pages and pages on Hindu deities.¹⁰⁰ How he would have found the time for this is a mystery. Then there are passages which seem reflective, and seem to have the benefit of hindsight.¹⁰¹ There are though many entries written in the present tense and on balance the diary as an account of the expedition, written after each day but on occasion with some time to reflect on how the material would represent what transpired, seems most likely. The submission of Kinloch's original journal into the EIC archives, from the private papers of Robert Clive's secretary William Stratchey, suggests it was kept within military hands rather than passed into the public domain, though of course this does not necessarily mean that was always set to be its fate – Skerslake's private purchase of the second copy is evidence that it did make that transition eventually, but judging by the condition and binding of the book, this was completed long after Kinloch's death.

Kinloch's journal is most useful to the historian as an indication of how Kinloch wanted himself to be viewed; how he performed as commanding officer. The journal also tells the reader much about how Kinloch viewed the Himalayas, and the events unfolding around him. What is more uncertain though, is whether Kinloch attributes actions to historical agents faithfully, or whether the roles ascribed to them were fictional – with agency emphasized here, downplayed there, in order to better support that view of his own position that he desired. Kinloch's statements of agency and influence thus need to be treated carefully. In fact, rather than the passages in which Kinloch directly attributes blame or quotes to his guides, it is in the everyday that agency can be read: for instance, manoeuvres, logistics, timings, and delays. Even then, the narrative could be very carefully calculated by Kinloch. This is countered by a great degree of caution, and recognition of the potential for manipulation.

¹⁰⁰ For instance at Janakpur in his discussion of the Hindu deities Ram and Sita, to be explored further in chapter IV. B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 14th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 15a.

¹⁰¹ For instance his reflection after the camp was flooded on 18th September, 'I thought the expedition wou'd end here and ... until daylight arrived I felt the utmost tortures...' was clearly not written that evening. B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 22b.

Ultimately, Kinloch's journal is incomplete. He completed a second notebook of 30 folios, which ends mid-sentence. At this stage he was ill and appears to have faced a critical event (his diary at this point records only that he was awoken by noise, and that he feared it was a mutiny.) If no further entries were ever written, it would suggest that Kinloch abandoned either his order to write, or his resolve to. This applies regardless of whether he wrote in the field or at Bettiah. However, this abrupt finish provides more questions and further difficulties than answers – it could simply be missing, or perhaps he did not have a third notebook in which to write. In the event that Kinloch never wrote the second half of his journal, or that any further documentation is irretrievably lost, we may never know for certain how Kinloch's return to the Company outpost at Bettiah unfolded. However, whilst the alternative sources detailed below may help us sketch an estimate, there is a danger in focusing too much on Kinloch's return to EIC territory. Historians attempting to reconstruct this missing segment of the narrative may neglect the actions, agendas and agency of marginalized characters that we do know about from earlier on in the journey, and instead prioritize the historiographical mystery of what happened to Kinloch.¹⁰² Other historians focusing on the 1767 expedition may be reluctant to draw any conclusions from the extant copies, for fear of being undermined should any further documentation come to light.

II:5 Source Critique II: The Colonial Archive

Other sources used within this thesis include Kinloch's correspondence with Thomas Rumbold at Patna, and his writing to the Select Committee. Further documents are taken from the extensive collection of Brian Houghton Hodgson, an early British resident of Kathmandu, living there from 1820 to 1843. The collection was deposited within the India Office library between 1838, whilst Hodgson was still resident, and 1864.¹⁰³ Historians of Anglo-Nepalese relations value this collection very highly, Ramesh Dhungel having described it as an 'uncategorized encyclopaedic record of eighteenth- and nineteenth-

¹⁰² One recent article that is very measured and detailed in sketching the narrative events of 1767 is that of Thomas Bell, 'What Happened to Captain Kinloch's 1767 Expedition to Nepal?', *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 50-51 (Autumn, 2017 -Spring, 2018), 7-32. Bell's article combined with Raj's publication of the diary facilitates and invites more in-depth historical analysis.

¹⁰³ Details on the collection and catalogue of the Houghton Hodgson collection have been taken from Michael Hutt and John Whelpton, 'The Catalogue of the Hodgson Collection in the British Library', *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 1 (1991), 129-143.

century Nepal'.¹⁰⁴ The collection contains a vast array of texts that cover political, economic, cultural, religious, military and linguistic affairs in Nepal.

Despite its appearance within the colonial archive, this is not simply a British resident's account of 'the orient': Brian Houghton Hodgson was a keen scholar, dedicated to the study of South Asian languages and opposed to Macaulay's reforms.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, he was aided by a score of Newari and Nepalese research assistants, and the collection includes many documents in their original form and language. Although ultimately the documents within this collection may have been carefully selected by Hodgson, they provide descriptive details about Prithvi Narayan Shah, the Kingdom of Gorkha and Anglo-Nepalese relations that are not solely composed by British colonial officials. The collection is not without its problems. The documents have been acquired and translated and, in some cases, written almost seventy years after the 1767 expedition. They are not contemporary to Kinloch. Hodgson was evidently enamoured by the Himalayas. He spent time in Nepal, Kumaon and Darjeeling, and had a Nepalese partner and children. He was an advocate for British-Nepalese relations, and in later life is said to have been concerned over the treatment of Indians by British colonial rule. His enthusiasm and contribution towards Nepalese studies should not be discredited. However, it is noteworthy that he had been previously advised the pursuit and provision of local knowledge was a fast track to the position of resident.¹⁰⁶ From that point on Hodgson began his collection. It is conceivable then that Hodgson may well have amassed and disseminated knowledge about Nepal not simply as a matter of individual interest, but self-interest; to advance his career. Whilst the former motivation ensures a degree of accuracy – that Hodgson pursued an authentic account of Nepal, the latter motivation denotes a target audience, British colonial officials in high-ranking positions from which they made appointments, and a target volume of knowledge: as much as possible, perhaps even quantity over quality. In summary, Hodgson's dedication to Nepalese studies does not release the sources he produced from an orientalist critique.

Also available within the archives are accounts of similar expeditions throughout the subcontinent, and resources that provide an insight into the Bengal Army in the field. Kinloch's expedition is discussed in relation to further expeditions – in an attempt to chart marginalized agency throughout an era of early British-Himalayan encounters. This includes George Bogle's and Thomas Manning's reflections on Tibet, James Rennell on the

¹⁰⁴ Hutt and Whelpton, 'The Catalogue of the Hodgson Collection', p.129.

¹⁰⁵ These reforms advocated the use of the English language over South Asian ones or Persian, infamously in South Asian education.

¹⁰⁶ Hutt and Whelpton, 'The Catalogue of the Hodgson Collection', p.134.

banks of the Brahmaputra, and Kirkpatrick on Nepal. The texts through which these expeditions are studied are similar in their form to those relating to 1767: diaries written by those taken part, minutes, letters and maps. The same methodological questions applied to Kinloch's journal are likewise applied to these, upon the introduction of each particular expedition.

An inevitable process in any archive's creation is the selection and presentation of items. For both these tasks, historical significance and meaning is attributed to the item by the archivist. This could affect which items are included and how they are categorized. The consequential collection is 'essentially what the archivist believes it is'.¹⁰⁷ An institution may seek to avoid subjectivity on behalf of the individual archivist by setting standards or guidelines, but even then, a decision is still made over what those standards are. Such constructive processes resound in the history of the India Office Records. It is noteworthy that the first EIC record keeper was not appointed until 1771 – after the Kinloch expedition.¹⁰⁸ So, whilst records before that date had been kept and stored, there was no standard procedure for whether or not a document was archived. The archive itself has passed from one institution to another over time, often being reviewed. At times this has involved the destruction or loss of documents, for example after the transfer of rule to the India Office, when three hundred tons of records were sold on as waste paper. In both these instances somebody, or some people, exercised control over which documents were deemed historically significant.

The ramification of this for a study of Kinloch's expedition is that there could be missing letters, reports or journals, in which marginalized actions were transcribed. Whilst there is no way of knowing this for sure, there is certainly evidence that items relating to the expedition are missing. For example Kinloch refers his superiors to a map of his intended route that has since become separated from the journals.¹⁰⁹ Consider this certainty of missing documents alongside the notion that during the two already identified moments of archival selection, in 1771 and in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion, the prominent historical narratives focused on the roles of Kinloch and Shah in a colonialist discourse: It

¹⁰⁷ Susan Pearce, 'The urge to Collect' in Susan Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.158.

¹⁰⁸ As early as the beginnings of the eighteenth century the Company showed concern for their ramshackle record keeping. It was not until the years after 1765, when the quantity of despatches and consultations mushroomed, that any wholehearted endeavour to catalogue their holdings was undertaken. In March 1771, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of paper being received from Asia, the EIC appointed William Barnett first Register and Keeper of India Records. The post was expanded in March 1787 as a result of a proposal made by Thomas Wilks. His efforts established the blueprint for what are now the India Office Records. Huw Bowen, *The Business of Empire: the East India Company and imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p.173.

¹⁰⁹ *Note from George Kinloch*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/7 Bengal Proceedings 9 Jan 1766 -16 Dec 1767.

becomes quite possible that an archivist choosing to omit documents relating to Kinloch would do so on the grounds that their subaltern subject was considered irrelevant, or incorrect. As one historian wrote, ‘even when the presence of others was admitted, their contributions to the exploration enterprise and its outcomes would invariably be obscured by their being reduced to ‘mere servants’ or ‘unnamed assistants.’¹¹⁰

Beyond the construction of the archive, there are also questions over the nature and construction of the documents being produced, disseminated and read by the EIC. A notable exploration of these processes is Miles Ogborn’s book *Indian Ink*, which aims to intersect debates on both eighteenth-century print culture and eighteenth-century India with a focus on the editing, compiling, correcting, annotating, and anthologizing of manuscripts, as well as practical processes of production by scribes, compositors, and pressmen. Some useful insights made include the absence of a significant printing press sector in Bengal until the late eighteenth century, meaning each copy of a document from Kinloch’s era was subject to the highly selective process of transcription by an individual scribe – as Ogborn notes, ‘only in very rare circumstances was the early modern text a sacrosanct one.’¹¹¹

Ogborn’s contributions calls into question the natural state of the archive and allow for the recognition of South Asian processes and actors that shaped its construction. By all means the texts within the archive were written by colonial officials, certainly with deliberation, and at times with the intention of reinforcing the colonial mission. But there are also times when the construction of the archive, that process in which a text is created then stored, has been worked by marginalized forces unbeknown to the historian, or even to the archivist, themselves. The previous example of Brian Houghton Hodgson’s collection is a case in point: Which texts were collected, how they were translated, was often the prerogative of the Nepalese research assistant, employed from Newari elite circles. Their influence could account for the high proportion of Newari texts within the collection. In this instance, many processes and roles that Ogborn deemed crucial to the construction of a written source were controlled by South Asian contributors: the selective process of translation and composition, the role of the scribe and researcher.

Jon Wilson wrote that ‘the colonial archive lies in the way of the historian’s recognition of the subaltern’s humanity or capacity to act freely for themselves’.¹¹² This is certainly true: the constructed state of the colonial archive, in both the creation and storage

¹¹⁰ Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent, Tiffany Shellam, eds, *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2015), p.5.

¹¹¹ Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) p.7.

¹¹² Wilson, ‘Agency, Narrative, and Resistance’, p.252.

of records, allows for a narrow-minded colonial official to write the subaltern out of history. However, Hodgson's case shows that there was space within that construction for the subaltern to shape their own representation. This thesis attempts to navigate the colonial archive in search of such agency, to extract South Asian experiences from the words of colonialist observers. Such a methodology is undoubtedly fraught with difficulties, deriving from the fact that South Asian experiences were rarely described. In the few examples where South Asian points of view have been written down, we have no way of knowing for sure that those words were their own. However, a recognition of both the processes of archival construction and the questions surrounding the authenticity of South Asian voices allows for a historical exploration of the subaltern role within the events transcribed.

II:6 Source Critique III: Nepalese Sources

There are historians who feel the use of a colonial archive such as the India Office Records, no matter how critically approached, is bad practice for the writing of postcolonial histories. Bidhan Golay described the problematic nature of the colonial archive in Nepal's context as a fixation on colonial knowledge, 'an innate feeling that the native's history can be authenticated only when it is culled from Western sources. In effect, the colonial discourses have become canonical texts for the production of knowledge.'¹¹³ In an attempt to avoid Kinloch's journal becoming such a 'canonical' text, a cross-referential approach has been taken – one that utilizes Nepalese, Indian and EIC sources.

Any study of EIC-Himalayan encounters inevitably spans a wide geographical space. In total this thesis incorporates critical engagement with the history of Bengal, India, Awadh, Kumaon, Garhwal, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, China, and Britain. An attempt to balance the source base with contributions from all these regions, or to draw conclusions that have trans-Himalayan implications, thus transcends multiple language and state boundaries.¹¹⁴ This in turn requires a wide access to archives and translated texts, in Kinloch's case made all the more difficult by its eighteenth-century time period, that has either hindered or deterred such attempts. For that reason, it is fortunate that there are a handful of letters within the India Office Records from the time that were written by the Indian elite – vassals and rulers who were literate in English. There are also a number of

¹¹³ Bidhan Golay, 'Rethinking Gorkha Identity: Outside the Imperium of Discourse, Hegemony, and History', in Tanka Bahadur Subba, ed., *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), p.87.

¹¹⁴ Shneiderman has noted that many recent contributions to Himalayan studies, though moving away from elite nation-state narratives, have still been region-specific. 'Afterword', p.138.

Nepalese sources from both Kathmandu and Delhi that are contemporary to Shah and Kinloch and can be used alongside the colonial archive.

The most prominent of these is a text known as the *Divyopades*, also written as *Dinya Upadesh* and translated as ‘divine counsel’. This takes the form of a royal decree or speech, outlining Shah’s guiding principles for the governance of Nepal. It begins with his own account of the conquest of Nepal Valley, his motivation behind it, before instructing on foreign and domestic policy – how to best negotiate Nepal’s relationships with China, India and the EIC. The most widely known English language translation of this document was Ludwig Stiller’s *Prithvinarayan Shah in the Light of Dinya Upadesh*, written in 1968.¹¹⁵ Both the original *Divyopades* and the use of Ludwig Stiller’s version are problematic. To begin with, there are questions over the document’s authenticity. The traditional story is that it was written before Shah departed Kathmandu for the last time before his death. Since he died in January 1775, and alternated his residency between the valley city and Nuwakot, this date is usually set at 1774. However, it has been suggested that it was put together much later, during King Mahendra’s rule in the mid-twentieth century, to push the nationalist interpretation of history he was advocating.¹¹⁶ John Whelpton went further to suggest that as well as questioning whether the words and thoughts within the document were those of Prithvi Narayan Shah, we may also need to debate whether this speech was constructed and delivered on one single occasion: ‘the Upadesh might conceivably be a compilation of remarks made by the king at different times.’ He noted that Stiller had not discussed this possibility or questioned the document’s authenticity in any way.¹¹⁷

The document opens with Shah’s address to a crowd: ‘what you who are gathered here will hear from me, pass on to your children, and they to ours.’¹¹⁸ However, since there are no other accounts of Shah delivering the *Divyopades* publicly, we cannot be sure that this took place, or that this was the document’s purpose, and this prologue could have been an addition. He may have meant for it to be disseminated with his legacy in mind or written it to ensure his heirs prospered. That is certainly the view of nationalist historians, who interpret this as a desire to see the unification of Nepal carried out beyond his death. Baburam Acharya for instance believed that the document was indeed the address of Shah, transcribed and collated by his brothers, sons, and courtiers in audience.¹¹⁹ The document does with the proverbial sounding statement, ‘when an old man dies, his words die with

¹¹⁵ Ludwig F. Stiller, *Prithvinarayan Shah in the Light of Dinya Upadesh* (Kathmandu, 1968).

¹¹⁶ Raj, *Expedition*, p.21.

¹¹⁷ Whelpton, ‘Response to Kamal Prakash Malla’, p.190.

¹¹⁸ Stiller, *Prithvinarayan Shah*, p.38.

¹¹⁹ Baburam Acharya, *Badamaharaj Prithvi Narayan Shah Ko Dinya Upadesh*, 2nd Edn (Kathmandu: Shree Krishna Acharya, 2014), pp.4-5.

him, so they say.¹²⁰ Until the document is dated though, much of this is entirely speculation, since there is little concrete evidence of Shah's authorship. A more object-based approach to the original document that Stiller transcribed, with careful analysis of its composition, the material on which it was written amongst other questions, might help here in asking whether when it was written down, by whom and for what purpose. That would require access to the original document on which Stiller relied, which appears elusive. Until then, the *Diyyopades* must be used far more critically than previously.

Regardless of whether the *Diyyopades* is genuine or not, it is still to be used carefully in the context of Kinloch's expedition, since it documents Shah's attitudes and foreign policy towards the EIC seven years after the attempted invasion. There are however copies of letters from Shah at Kirtipur to his soldiers who were opposing Kinloch, and one from the Gorkhali king to the EIC at Patna, written shortly before the expedition. These shed some light on the encounter as it happened, rather than in hindsight. However, neither the letters from Bengali elite within the colonial archive, nor Shah's *Diyyopades*, nor the letters to his generals are representative of the vast majority of Indian and Nepalese society: the subaltern, marginalized classes whose role this thesis hopes to examine. Their experiences of these events are more difficult to extract from the sources available. This is mostly due to the lack of written sources, as Dipesh Chakrabarty laments, 'historians of peasants and other subaltern social groups have long emphasized the fact that peasants do not leave their own documents.'¹²¹

One option that the historian has is to 'read against the grain,' a phrase most often associated with Carlo Ginzberg and his work *The Cheese and the Worms*.¹²² The metaphor refers to the fibres in timber – to cut the wood parallel with these is relatively easy, but the resulting split is predetermined by those fibres, and will inevitably follow them. To cut across them on the other hand requires more effort, and the woodcutter has to deliberately ignore the instructive fibres, yet the outcome could show different contours beneath the outer layer. Applying the metaphor to historical research essentially advocates a subversive reading of texts, such as those found within the India Office Records. It recognizes the dominant cultural belief systems (the fibres) that have affected these texts, nationalism or orientalism for instance, and then attempts to read the text differently, identifying and rejecting any description tainted by these systems. The result is often a reading of the text entirely oppositional to the one intended by the author, but no less insightful. Ginzberg

¹²⁰ Stiller, *Prithvinarayan Shah*, p.38.

¹²¹ Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography', p.23.

¹²² Carlo Ginzberg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

was reading the records of trials by Italian inquisitors, placing heresy into the narratives of the peasantry so that prosecution was justified. He found however that if a reader ignored the inquisitor's assumptions and instead searched for the voices and explanations of the accused, their worldview and experiences emerged. By extension, Ann Stoler's 'along the grain' concept can likewise be drawn upon: emphasising the colonial archive as a process, one that was far from perfect, gives the historian an opportunity through which to learn from the inaccurate and the incomplete within an archive.¹²³ In this sense, the lack of marginalized characters within the colonial record, or the error with which their actions are reported, can still tell us much about their relationship with colonial agents and enterprises. These techniques are therefore applied to Kinloch's description of the people the expedition met, and the places they passed through, in the hope that they sketch a more complex, varied and calculated Nepalese response to the British soldiers at their doorstep.

When faced with the difficult task of recovering subaltern voices, some historians have turned to other disciplines for help, for instance anthropology, demography, sociology or archaeology. Using these methodologies can be a solution to the lack of written subaltern sources. For, as Eugene Weber has stated, 'the illiterate are not in fact inarticulate; they can and do express themselves in several ways.'¹²⁴ One such expression in Nepal was the oral tradition of folk songs, often sung with highly localized characteristics, some of which commemorate victory over the British. Alternatively, research could be undertaken into the Sindhuli Gadhi site and the landscape itself. Whether these features match up to Kinloch's descriptions or not can indicate a host of things; for instance, whether he was in fact marching through the valleys he named, or whether he had been unknowingly led off course by his South Asian guides. These are all worthwhile lines of enquiry that could further our understanding of the 1767 encounter, however such is the extent of the new methodological problems they invoke that they mostly fall outside the practical parameters of this thesis, which adopts an archival, text-based approach. In the few instances where such sources are consulted, their context and usage are addressed.

II:7 Conclusions

The decolonizing, subalternist methodological approach taken utilizes Kinloch's journal and those of other expeditions alongside the wider archive, British, Nepalese and Indian sources. Given that each of these source bases incurs their own set of problems, as

¹²³ Ann Laura Stoller, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p.20.

¹²⁴ Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography', p.23.

described in this chapter so far, the project may seem ambitious. It is nevertheless warranted by the historiographical impetus for the study of the marginalized historical subject as outlined in chapter I, and made viable by the parameters, considerations and approaches outlined within this chapter. Such an inter-methodological approach to singular events and actions gives strength to any conclusions drawn that would otherwise be hindered by the limitations of one particular practice. This allows for an exploration of marginalized agency – the positing of possibilities, and a clearer definition of restrictions beyond those imposed by colonial agents silencing the subaltern. From those discussions, continuities and connections in such agency are discernible.

Chapter III - *The Root and the Rocks*: Gorkha, Nepal, the EIC, and the Road to War in 1767

Summary

This chapter explores the web of competing ideas, interests, and considerations that led to the EIC expedition of 1767 setting out. The chapter first revisits a series of events in the conflict between Gorkha and Kathmandu that culminated in EIC intervention. The notion that Shah himself interpreted Gorkhali expansion as the protectionist unification of various Himalayan hill states against colonization has often been drawn from one particularly emotive phrase in the *Divyopades* – wherein the author of that document describes Nepal as ‘a root between two rocks’.¹ Nationalist historians keenly promoting the ‘unification not conquest’ interpretation have rallied around this phrase, with the rocks being China and India. Shah’s detractors on the other hand consider these campaigns violent, assertive, and authoritative in their nature and purpose. Both interpretations are reductionist, simplifying the narrative to a Shah-focussed, unification or conquest binary. This discussion therefore draws attention to the role of hitherto neglected agents and factors within those events, exploring incentives, actions and circumstances beyond those of Prithvi Narayan Shah and Jaya Prakash Malla.

The chapter then demonstrates how EIC knowledge of the Himalayas and arguments for involvement in that space were shaped in part by external parties – a cast of intermediaries, European and South Asian, whose significance in providing information, and the importance of that information in determining EIC representation, has been neglected. The chapter then explores the decision to intervene: presented with the call for assistance from Nepal, and convinced of a Gorkhali threat to EIC interests, the Company had to decide whether to intervene and if so, how to go about it. Within those processes, individuals were able to manipulate information to force a particular outcome: the 1767 invasion. Finally, the chapter introduces the different components of the expedition that were involved in subsequent encounters – what they consisted of and who they were, whether those individuals or groups chose to travel, and what was at stake for them.

III:1 Re-interpreting Gorkhali Expansion, 1743-1767

¹ Alternatively, ‘root’ is occasionally translated as ‘yam’ or ‘gourd,’ ‘rocks’ translated as ‘boulders’. The metaphor still remains the same. *Divyopades*, p.48.

High on a ridge in the central hills of what is now Nepal perched the city-state of Gorkha. The city housed roughly five thousand residents and was one of the smaller states within the *Chaubisi Rajya* confederacy, a loose alliance of over twenty states spanning central and mid-western Nepal. Prithvi Narayan Shah was born in the Gorkha Durbar in 1723, becoming king in 1743. From then until his death in 1775, Gorkha would transform. His conquests began with a series of attacks on Nuwakot, a city within the territory of Jaya Prakash Malla of Kathmandu. For two decades Gorkhali expansion involved the incorporation of the other *Chaubisi Rajya* states within the foothills through alliance or conquest, before expansion accelerated towards the Tarai and encirclement of Nepal Valley in the mid-1760s. Before his death in 1775 Shah had begun conquests further east towards Limbu and Morang, whilst much of western Nepal including the *Baisi Rajya* states held some form of tributary status. At its height in 1814, the kingdom would stretch to Sikkim in the east and the Sutlej river in the west.

This section does not provide a narrative of Gorkhali expansion but instead critiques colonialist assumptions, moderates the attributed significance of the ‘unification or conquest’ debate within Nepalese historiography, and explores the significance of marginalized agency and influence within events that led to the political situation of 1767.² Examples are extrapolated either through a critical reading of existing narratives, contemporary Nepalese sources (such as the *Diwopades*) or views from colonial Calcutta present in the India Office Records, notwithstanding the methodological issues involved with this source base. The section focuses on a loosely chronological series of highlights that led to the Gorkhali siege of Kathmandu in 1767: Shah’s visit to Benares in 1743, relations with the city of Makwanpur, Nepalese resistance to Gorkhali expansion and military considerations during the prolonged campaign from 1744, and the conquest of Kirtipur in 1766.

Despite the nationalist interpretation that Shah acted in response to British imperialism, Gorkha expansion and state consolidation had begun much earlier than his birth, let alone his ascendance to the throne in 1743 and significantly earlier than the British victories of Plassey and Buxar. His own father Narabhupal Shah had attempted to expand Gorkhali influence by securing alliances with Khanchi, Palpa and Parbat, three states amongst the wider *Chaubisi* confederacy, and had attacked Nuwakot in 1737.³ This

² A more thorough timeline could be found in either Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, T.R. Vaidya, *Advanced History of Nepal, 1737-1839* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1994), or I. Baral, ‘*The Life and Writings of Prithvi Narayan Shah*’ (*unpublished PhD thesis*, London University, 1964).

³ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.23.

campaign notably ended in failure through factionalism within the ranks of the soldiers he sent. The two commanders whom Narabhupal sent 'blamed each other for their failure'.⁴ This enables us to consider Shah's expansion campaigns as the continuity of his father's agenda, rather than the result of anti-colonialist premonitions.

A visit to Benares in 1743 shortly after Shah's coronation casts further doubt on the 'unification' interpretation – it is assumed that Shah observed the rising threat of the EIC on that trip. Accordingly, he returned to Gorkha determined to create a force that could oppose this, realising that he would need to match their economical-political strength. Within this interpretation, 'the unification was as much the means of Nepali sovereignty as the resistance against British imperialism'.⁵ Ludwig Stiller amongst others have queried this, asking, 'one wonders *what* he might have seen,' before coming to the conclusion that if his time in Benares turned him against the British, there 'simply was not sufficient evidence for such a conclusion'.⁶ Instead, Stiller argued that the Gorkhali conquests were 'part of a pattern of state-building and expansion across a wider area of Asia,' which included the EIC's seizure of Bengal and China's increasing control in Tibet, and the expansion of the Marathas and Sikh Empire further afield.⁷ At the time of Shah's visit, Alivardi Khan was limiting EIC power in Bengal quite competently, asserting independence from Delhi. Shah would have witnessed the conflict between the regional governors of Bihar and Awadh, enriching themselves at the expense of another part of the empire whilst still under the threat of the Marathas.⁸ He may himself have seen an opportunity – after all he did not then return to Gorkha and campaign for peace amongst the hill-states, but instead annexed them. He may also have cast his eyes upon the lapsing territories of the Mughal Emperor in the Tarai, oblivious to the EIC.⁹ Shah's lesson from Benares was firstly that division created opportunity for expansion, and secondly that the Mughals had struggled to conquer the uplands region of India in their Maratha wars and would surely likewise struggle in the Himalayan foothills. A further observation is that Shah went to Benares to visit his father-in-law Abhiman Singh, to receive his endorsement and to purchase firearms – Across South Asia, precision firing infantry were winning the field: able to out-manoeuvre Mughal heavy artillery and keep Maratha cavalry at a distance.¹⁰ In

⁴ Quoted within the *Bhasa Vamsavali*, in Vaidya, *Advanced History*, p.23.

⁵ Kafle, 'Prithvi Narayan Shah and Postcolonial Resistance', p.142.

⁶ Stiller, 'The Role of Fear', p.49.

⁷ Whelpton, 'Response to Kamal Prakash Malla's Review of History of Nepal', p.188.

⁸ Stiller, 'The Role of Fear', p.48.

⁹ This was also the interpretation of previous colonialists, though more in an attempt to emphasize his expansionist policies. MacMunn, *The Martial Races*, p.187.

¹⁰ Channa Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops in the World: British Perceptions and the Making of the Sepoy 1746-1805* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002), pp.66-69.

obtaining firearms, Shah was not so much countering the EIC threat with this acquisition, but preparing for expansion. Monarchical legitimacy and the extension of Gorkha's war-waging capabilities were therefore already on the agenda before he observed either the decline of the Mughals or the rise of the EIC.

Having returned from Benares, Shah's relations with Nepal Valley and the Malla city states did not begin with conflict, but with marriage. In his youth Shah was sent to Bhaktapur and placed under the tutorship of the city's ruler Ranajit Malla, as part of his father's efforts to establish a diplomatic relationship with that city.¹¹ That connection secured his marriage to a Sen dynasty princess of Makwanpur, a small city-state strategically placed between the plains and the valley, with further links of its own to the Patan throne.¹² However, what was supposed to secure family ties soon turned sour, when the bride's brothers barred her from travelling to Gorkha, which Shah considered a grave insult. The role of the bride herself and those deteriorated family connections are previously marginalized factors within the expansion campaigns: Shah's Sen bride did not provide an heir in comparison to his other wife Narendra Lakshmi Devi (daughter of Abhiman Singh) and as such has partly been forgotten. She is not named in texts other than being recognized as the daughter of Hemkarna Sen, the Raja of Makwanpur. Yet her involvement in this quarrel was instrumental, laying the foundations for future conflict. By 1764 Digbandhan Sen, Shah's brother-in-law, had succeeded his father Hemkarna. Shah had not forgiven Digbandhan Sen for his refusal to allow his sister to travel, and Sen's refusal to supply the Gorkhali with an elephant for the ongoing siege of Kirtipur worsened the rift, shunting Makwanpur towards an alliance with Kathmandu.¹³ By 1763 the brothers-in-law were at war with one another. This disturbed one of the 'rocks,' the Mughal successor states of northern India, from whence help was provided by Mir Kasim of Bengal, angered by Prithvi's invasion of Makwanpur, a Mughal vassal state.¹⁴ If a powerful Mughal ruler intervened with force, the Gorkhals could have been stopped in their tracks. However, Mir Kasim's invading army was resoundingly defeated.

Revisiting Gorkhali expansion from the initial attack of Nuwakot in 1743 to the 1766 conquest of Kirtipur offers a number of opportunities in which to emphasize marginalized agency: ways in which the local resisted, ways in which the Gorkhali military countered this resistance, ways in which Shah had to accommodate the agendas of courtiers, and ways in which he was assisted by intelligence networks. Drawing attention to

¹¹ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.24.

¹² Ibid., p.97.

¹³ C.R. Swaminathan, 'A Eulogy on the Great King Prithvinarayan Shah', *Ancient Nepal*, 4 (July, 1968), p.3.

¹⁴ Whelpton, *A History of Nepal*, p.37.

these four factors in the following paragraphs challenges notions of anti-colonial unification, martial ethnicity, autocracy and individual responsibility respectively.

Resistance on behalf of the localities that the Gorkhalis defeated has been downplayed by nationalist historians keen to emphasize a unity behind Shah. There are however a number of examples prior to 1767 that challenge that notion. Gorkha initially failed to subdue the neighbouring *Chaubisi Rajya* states: Pradhan notes that the state of Lamjung was highly suspicious of rising Gorkhali power, and that Shah could not proceed to Nepal Valley whilst that city remained to Gorkha's rear. Rather than confront Lamjung, Shah sent envoys Harihar Pandit, Manikantha Rana and Gangadhar Pant to its rivals of Palpa, Kaski and Tanahu respectively, in the hope that they could persuade those states to side with Gorkha against Lamjung and then Nepal Valley.¹⁵ Their failure to do so may partly be attributed to those cities' links to Tibet, and a concern for their security should Gorkha annex Nepal Valley, and partly to the performance of those envoys. Shah had more success upon sending a higher-ranking envoy to Lamjung itself and an alliance was formed. However, the agreement was never a sincere one – the Divoyopades retrospectively reflecting Gorkha policy towards Lamjung: 'Lamjung is like a hawk, Gorkha like a serpent and Nepal, a frog. The serpent must delude the eyes of the hawk, only then can it devour the frog'.¹⁶ By 1754 the Gorkhalis had seized Lamjung territory in order to blockade the Kuti Pass, and trust had broken down. By 1764, the *Chaubisi* states had collectively recognized that Gorkhali conquest was not in their best interests and launched an attack. It was only by enforcing conscription on all males over twelve years old that the Gorkhali were able to subdue them.¹⁷

Gorkhali expansion was also stalled by widespread resistance from a more surprising quarter. By 1754 the Gorkhalis were impeding both the Kuti and Kyirong passes. Tibetan merchants were therefore aggrieved by Shah's blockade of Nepal Valley and his attempt to establish Gorkhali minted coins as legal tender within Tibet (in the same way Malla's Newari coins were accepted.) What followed was a series of rebellions and non-co-operation on their behalf that greatly hindered Gorkha's commercial operations, and the financial backing for military operations that Shah relied upon. Gorkhali merchants were reportedly robbed along the border and required soldiers for protection; Tibetans refused them the sale of salt.¹⁸ They found ingenious ways of smuggling goods through the

¹⁵ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.97.

¹⁶ *Divoyopades*, p.40.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.102.

Gorkhali blockade: it was customary for Hindus to transport their dead to the valley, wrapped in cloths, for funeral rites along the Bagmati. Noting the increased frequency that this was being practiced, the Gorkhalis suspected that something was amiss. Upon checking the deceased, they found the cloth more often stuffed with salt and other contraband.¹⁹ It is clear that Gorkhali expansion was not unilaterally accepted by those residing in the states threatened or annexed, this relationship more often being characterized by resistance and concession than acceptance and co-operation. The salt-merchant's methods in particular mirrored the endeavours of the *Bhotia* traders in Kumaon years later, who refused to sell salt directly to Companyment when the EIC took over the region, as outlined by Pande in chapter II.

Gorkha did have a significant advantage in its military. This advantage did not stem from the martial ethnicity that both the colonialist and nationalist discourses endorse: a short investigation instead highlights key differences in the martial structure of Gorkha and other Himalayan hill states, noticeably Kathmandu. Gorkha victories in the field were predominantly a result of numbers, the incentives offered to those soldiers, and the choice of these marginalized agents to serve in such an occupation, rather than any marital prowess.

Malla's forces were small in number. Jaya Prakash was hindered by demographics, since Kathmandu was not a large city and could not contribute much manpower. KP Malla has drawn attention to its lack of standing army.²⁰ Instead, the city state was forced to recruit heavily from the Tarai and the far western hills.²¹ This raises questions over the loyalties of these soldiers. In contrast, estimates of Gorkhali fighting strength reach 50,000 – considerably more than the entire population of Kathmandu. Whilst Gorkha itself was a smaller city than Kathmandu, the region had a history of military conscription, a legacy of the Khasa Empire. The EIC held an impression of Gorkhali soldiers as reluctant. They harboured a belief that many would be easily persuaded to turn against Shah, and did 'not believe that they fight for any regard or attachement to his [Shah's] causes'.²² They knew very little of the incentives being offered, and accepted, by soldiers from newly conquered territories. The offer of land parcels surely motivated the subaltern recruit and marks a deviation from other military structures at the time, in which rulers rewarded the officers who then raised and paid regiments themselves (they often did not provide that pay.)²³ These individuals then made the decision to serve Shah efficiently and loyally. It was a

¹⁹ Vaidya, *Advanced History*, p.45.

²⁰ Malla, review of *A History of Nepal*, p.178.

²¹ Vaidya, *Advanced History*, p.39.

²² B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 25th September 1767, Book 2 Folio 6b.

²³ Whelpton, *A History of Nepal*, p.37.

decision that balanced the reward offered with the risk posed, not a decision based on any inherent martial identity within the hill-states.

Despite such rewards and incentives for military success, Shah's Gorkhali state was not entirely a martial one and there existed aristocratic, courtier control over political positions and actions, including military ones. Whilst military success could be rewarded with land-parcels, military rank remained defined by caste, with Chetris dominating the officer positions, Magars and Gurungs as the rank and file.²⁴ Nor does Shah consistently demonstrate the military genius often attributed to him. It took him a long time for instance to deploy the expensive and advantageous firearms that he purchased in Benares from his father-in-law Abhiman Singh. They were not utilized until the siege of Kathmandu in 1767.²⁵ Any suggestion that instead Shah opted for an astute reliance on traditional, familiar arms is undermined by the prolonged length of time it took for his campaigns to develop, and the breakthrough that these firearms provided upon use.

There were some strategic decisions attributed to Shah that influenced the course of the war. One such incisive diplomatic ploy was to write to the British, expressing his willingness to visit Patna for a negotiated settlement provided they guaranteed his safety. This was, according to Baburam Acharya, the Gorkhali king's way of 'assessing the English plan and to confuse them'.²⁶ This letter arrived immediately before Jaya Prakash's plea for assistance, suggesting Shah knew a request for intervention was imminent. It was enough to stall the British until the rains began. This constituted part of a more prolonged letter-writing campaign: Nepalese historian Vaidya reported that Shah sent letters to Kathmandu courtiers, including Jaya Prakash Malla's mother, in which he 'was much obliged for their sincerity towards him and they would be well rewarded for their co-operation'. The letters were reportedly delivered 'in such a way that they were received by Jaya Prakash'.²⁷ However, these ploys cannot be attributed entirely to Shah: whose idea it was to write to the EIC, either to confuse, negotiate or stall them, is not clear. Shah certainly would have endorsed the subterfuge campaign since the letters were signed in his name, yet there is no evidence that he participated personally in it – he did not deliver them or ensure their designed Malla interception, and may not have written them. Although the majority of those individuals involved in this network are unknown, the letters do name at least three: Nilakantha Josi, Abhusasingh Pradhan, and Kirtira Jananda Upadhyaya. The first individual worked in Bhaktapur, and was rewarded for his services being excused *jhara* military labour

²⁴ Ibid., p.50.

²⁵ Swaminathan, 'A Eulogy', p.4.

²⁶ Baburam Acharya, quoted in Raj, *Expedition*, p.20.

²⁷ Vaidya, *Advanced History*, p.43.

after the valley was conquered. Abhusasingh Pradhan, a resident of Kathmandu, was the recipient of the following correspondence from Shah: 'serve my interests by all means, only your performance will prove that you are mine. Complete the task by creating a rift there'. Kirtira Janada received similar instruction, 'complete the task by regarding the throne of Kathmandu by secret plan with your uncles... your landed property and priesthood are hereby assured'.²⁸ Shah's success would clearly not have been possible were it not for a competent degree of espionage by these individuals, who successfully infiltrated the upper echelons of Malla's court. The role of the messengers and spies ensuring that this deception worked should not be overlooked.

The Gorkhali breakthrough came in 1766 upon the fall of Kirtipur, a strategically important city within Nepal Valley. Kirtipur was first attacked in 1757, and again in 1764. After sustaining a seven-month siege, the town fell in March 1766, allegedly after a nobleman called Dhanavanta betrayed the garrison and opened the doors to the Gorkhalis.²⁹ It is from this victory that one of the most enduring colonialist visions of the Gorkhali 'oriental despot' originated: the mutilation of citizens so reported by Kirkpatrick, previously discussed in chapter I. Yet the reality of Shah's rule was certainly more nuanced than this discourse would allow: in weighing up the various reports and evidence, historians agree that upon the defeat of Kirtipur the inhabitants were attacked and dismembered. However, it may not have been Shah himself who decreed this act, but rather the more zealous of his soldiers.³⁰ This would suggest a lack of control over these marginalized agents, rather than control enforced through violence as would be expected from an 'oriental despot'. Further reports on this would provide some clarity, for instance whether those who orchestrated the violence were then punished, but alas, these are not extant. Instead of asking whether Shah did perpetrate or orchestrate this act, a more productive line of enquiry may be to ask whether such violence was in fact out of the ordinary in eighteenth-century warfare. By all accounts the dismembering of defeated opponents at Kirtipur shocked Calcutta, since it was not a punishment the EIC practiced. Yet the Company execution of 'blowing from cannons,' wherein a prisoner's body parts could be physically scattered, was particularly horrific to Hindus since it denied that person traditional death rites. Similarly, the introduction of the noose to Company retribution on campaign against the Nayaks in South India twenty years after Kirtipur, though intended as

²⁸ Shah's letters, numbers 16 (1758) 17 (1759), 22 (1763) and 31 (1763) from the *Diyyopades*, quoted in Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.107.

²⁹ Reported by Father Guiseppe, appendix in Kirkpatrick's Account of Nepaul, p.383. Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.109.

³⁰ Thapa, *Forget Kathmandu*, p.57.

a more humane punishment, was considered brutal in India, where public hanging was new.³¹ Historians evaluating Gorkhali rule could easily conclude that it was characterized by terror and brutality if unwittingly assessing Shah outside this eighteenth-century South Asian context.

It was these factors combined, a narrative of marginalized resistance overcome by marginalized endeavours in support of Shah, directed by long-neglected political interests and loyalties, that meant by 1767 the Gorkhalis more or less encircled Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.

III:2 Accounting for the Malla Request for Intervention

Jaya Prakash Malla's detractors would suggest the defeat of Mir Kasim by Shah in 1763 would have been the ideal point at which to request further assistance from the EIC. Within the colonialist discourse, the failure to do so has been attributed to both an isolated, withdrawn foreign policy, and a prevalence of theatrics, on behalf of the states of Kantipur (Kathmandu), Lalitpur (Patan), and Bhaktapur (Bhadgaon), the three Newari cities. An examination of these ideas exposes their flaws: there were good reasons for caution before inviting EIC intervention, and developments elsewhere in South Asia may have been regarded by Malla, his advisors, and his rivals alike with wary eyes. Yet it was dissent within that courtly circle, and a deteriorating relationship with the wider population in adversity, that worsened the situation.

The notion that the valley was too withdrawn from events elsewhere in South Asia patronizes the city-states, and the people within it, by isolating them and suggesting a naivety when faced with the Gorkhali and EIC. On the contrary, the Newari cities had a rich history of trade and commerce with Tibet, Bengal, Awadh, and further afield (Jaya Prakash Malla's emissary, Muktananda, who was potentially Kashmiri, is indicative of this.) Kathmandu was also the junction for two routes to Tibet through the Kuti and Kyirong passes, and a stopping point since the Tarai couldn't be travelled in summer, nor the mountains in winter.³² Moreover, although city-states in their own right, many kingdoms within the foothills had a peripheral, tributary relationship to those in Nepal Valley. It is similar to what Burton called the 'segmented state' in India, characterized by numerous political centres (Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur) and recognition of a single ritual centre

³¹ C.A. Bayly, 'The British Military-Fiscal State and Indigenous Resistance', in Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.345.

³² Whelpton, *A History of Nepal*, p.27.

and anointed king by lesser political centres, (client-states such as Makwanpur and Nuwakot) often through ritual forms.³³ These various cities were not isolated, but woven close together through migration, trade, commerce, patronage and religion. The importance of this for the study of marginalized historical agents is that people's experiences of outsiders would be much greater than pre-supposed. For example, those living in the foothills did not have previous experience of the EIC marching their sepoy en route to Nepal. However, upon encountering the 1767 expedition they would have known these were the soldiers of the *Company Bahadur* (the Nepalese term for the EIC) and would have known a great deal about the sepoy's Bengal homelands.

There is a tendency to see Malla rule as a 'theatre state,' a representation wherein the rivalries between the three descendant Malla kingdoms were played out in architecture, pageantry and performance, rather than through war and violence. Certainly, cultural achievements were not apolitical but invested in symbolic power, yet this representation idealizes and romanticizes the Malla era – small hermitic kingdoms that dedicated their resources to the advancement of culture and art, only to fall helpless victims to the rapacious, militant Gorkhalis. This is in keeping with a wider representation of cultural decline in South Asia in the eighteenth century that then legitimized colonialist interventions like 1767. Malla rule has been painted as weak, deteriorating, and vulnerable, rendering the Gorkha conquest inevitable. Such a narrative diminishes the actions of historical agents who secured certain outcomes against the odds or acted unusually at certain points in the events leading up to 1767. The Malla kingdoms were not at the height of their power and were comparatively more vulnerable, yet they were not helpless, and the Gorkhali were not bound to succeed. Jaya Prakash Malla lost his throne before in 1750 but regained it through military force. He had fought and repelled the Gorkhali for two decades: despite their expansion beginning in the seventeenth century, the war waged for Nepal Valley was long and Shah was thwarted on numerous occasions.

The EIC's turn to arms in the aftermath of Plassey and overt militarization had an immediate impact on Indian politics. The Company received a host of requests for officers to train infantry divisions from South Asian rulers, and even for contingents of Company troops to support royal armies.³⁴ A Nepalese raja may well have sent a request for intervention hoping to secure the arms and force of the soldiers of the *Company Bahadur*, or they may alternatively have been acting out of desperation and urgency. For these reasons, it is quite easy to see how the EIC were sucked into Indian politics, deployed against other

³³ Stein, *A History of India*, p.20.

³⁴ Ibid., pp.203-204.

South Asian forces, as regional powers sought out one particular commodity – military force – that the Company were often reluctant to part with.³⁵ However, such assistance came at a great cost to the South Asian rulers, placing huge strain on the coffers and tax systems of these kingdoms, often leading to destabilization.³⁶ Importantly it often came with the condition that the EIC cohorts were retained for a period of time after the conflict, a prerequisite that ensured the EIC continued to reap revenue long after the soldiers were required.

Despite having minimal contact with the EIC, the damaging effects of this were immediately visible to the Mallas in neighbouring states. Pressed to solicit the EIC under threat from the Marathas, the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-Ud-Daulah, became legally enthralled to this service. This continued after that threat was partly deterred in 1760 at the Third Battle of Panipat. In the following years Awadh rebelled against EIC, the Nawab siding with Mir Kasim on the following grounds:

...You have interfered in the King's country, possessed yourselves of districts belonging to the government, such as Burdwan and Chittagong, and turned out and established nabobs at your pleasure without consent of the imperial court and exposed the government of the King of Kings to contempt and dishonour; since you have ruined the trade of the merchants of the country, granted protection to the Kings servants, injured the revenues of the imperial court and crushed the inhabitants by your acts of violence and oppression, and since you are continually sending fresh people from Calcutta and invading different parts of the royal dominions, and have even plundered several villages and purgunnas belonging to the province of Allahabad, to what can all these your proceedings be attributed but to an absolute disregard for the court and the wicked design of seizing the country for yourselves.³⁷

The Nawab of Awadh was defeated alongside Mir Kasim at Buxar. The Company would then impose on him a new treaty in 1768 that limited his forces to 30,000. Other articles within the treaty granted English merchants the right to engage in trade with Awadh and to enjoy substantial custom privileges. Both these provisions brought the state into the vice-like grip of the Company.³⁸ Jaya Prakash Malla would have been aware of Shuja-Ud-Daulah's hostility to the EIC. He may even have shared the same concerns, and would have watched on in the aftermath of Buxar with apprehension.

³⁵ Alavi, 'Introduction', p.24.

³⁶ Bates, *Subalterns and Raj*, p.25.

³⁷ *Shuja Ul Dowla to the Governor and Council, received 25th April 1764*, in B.L. IOR/H/805 Papers from Bengal and Madras, p.1085.

³⁸ Subramanian, *History of India*, pp.65-67.

If not Malla himself, there may have been courtly factions resistant to the prospect of EIC intervention. How would the residents of his city react? Would they consider EIC just as much a threat as the Gorkhali, and if so, could he guarantee their subordination? This question had troubled Jaya Prakash Malla in the past. In living memory (the 1740s) he had quelled a rebellion from within the army and was frequently engaged in a battle to maintain his own control over Kathmandu.³⁹ These divisions caused by competing courtly interests can be emphasized further. Those with a greater stake in Kathmandu's Himalayan trade, cut off by Gorkhali incursions, supported Malla. On the other hand, there were residents with bonds of business and interchange with Gorkha. After Kathmandu monopolized the Tibet trade from 1650 onwards, other city-states began cultivating a stronger relationship with Gorkha. In particular, merchants from Patan were allowed to establish themselves at there and use their coinage in the western hills.⁴⁰ By 1767 there would therefore have been many trading Newaris with closer economic ties to Gorkha, to the extent that they may have even had family there.

Jaya Prakash Malla was further undermined by the mood of the wider populace: the blockade lasted a long time and smugglers were severely punished. There was little food, and famine.⁴¹ It became apparent in 1764 that many of the *pramans*, merchant gentry in Patan and Kathmandu, had unbeknownst to Jaya Prakash Malla begun negotiations with Shah to re-open the Tibetan trade. Such an attempt was audacious: it would have involved subterfuge and secrecy. Malla's response was brutal, involving execution, public humiliation and exile. In turn, a substantial portion of these traders threw their support behind Shah.⁴² The point here is that owing to other competing interests, Jaya Prakash Malla could not control the support and allegiance of those in Nepal Valley.

Ominous developments elsewhere in South Asia and internal resistance to the EIC led Jaya Prakash Malla to first seek help from the Mughals, not the British. The Mughals certainly had a history of aggression in the Himalayas, most notably by Jahangir in the early 1600s, from Assam to Kashmir.⁴³ However, since then the Malla Kingdoms had cultivated cordial relations. As already discussed though, Mir Kasim's intervention on behalf of Shah Alam II in 1763 failed. Perhaps deterred by the troubling precedents to the south, Jaya Prakash Malla had by 1767 so far avoided knocking on the door of the EIC. It was the last one he turned to.

³⁹ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.99.

⁴⁰ Whelpton, *A History of Nepal*, p.28.

⁴¹ Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.106.

⁴² Ibid., p.107.

⁴³ Stein, *A History of India*, p.170.

III:3 The EIC at Patna and the Formation of Colonial Himalayan Knowledge.

This chapter now asks how and why the EIC were established at Patna, what existing visions of the Himalayas they harboured, what incentives there were for involvement and importantly from which previously marginalized people and places these representations come from.

Although founded in 1600 and having first established a settlement in India in 1618, the EIC would not achieve noteworthy territorial possession, other than the hinterlands of its major trading centres, until the 1760s. Victory at the battle of Plassey, in which the Bengali general Mir Jafar turned against the Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah, secured Company access and de facto control over vast swathes of Bengal. With this additional land came revenue, and a significant addition in personnel: the need for more traders, administrators, and soldiers. British presence specifically at Patna can be explained by highlighting a convergence of agendas. The commercial and strategic importance for this town was clear to the Company. It was central to riverine trade routes, in particular that of Rajmahal to Allahabad by the Ganges, crucially intersecting at Patna with the land route to Agra.⁴⁴ Patna furthermore provided a gateway into the Bihar countryside, a base from which hinterland markets could be tapped. This agenda was achieved - a factory had been maintained there since the 1650s, trading silk and saltpetre alongside other European establishments. It was nevertheless highly isolated at times, apparent when it was overran by Mir Kasim in 1763. Not all Company officials posted there would have been content. Those with a smaller remit for commercial opportunism would perhaps envy the wider social circle and suspected luxury of Calcutta, and begrudge their failure to obtain a different post. On the other hand, the Nawabs of Bengal may have resented British mercantile and military presence so far within their territory. Yet that does not compose the entire South Asian experience, and the local merchant classes could have welcomed the opportunities it brought, at least to a small cohort of them.

From Patna and other outposts close to the foothills, the Company had begun to gather information about the Himalayas. From these reports, the EIC developed a commercial interest in Nepal. This involved potential trade revenue, and a desire for Himalayan goods such as salt, timber, musk, yak-tails, horses, metal utensils, honey, cassia, wax, rock oil, silk and cloth.⁴⁵ This interest is certainly reflected in Kinloch's observations. He noted the lack of pine timber, and furthermore not just the abundance of copper and

⁴⁴ Subramanian, *History of India*, p.134.

⁴⁵ Raj, *Expedition*, p.5.

iron, but importantly that ‘their distance from any river and great difficulty of access renders the minerals of no use’.⁴⁶

However, that information was still very sparse. By 1767, the British had not yet mastered the extensive intelligence systems of their Mughal predecessors, which Christopher Bayly argued took place in earnest from 1785-1815.⁴⁷ The Kinloch expedition thus predated regular posts, improvement in communications by seas and river (especially after French privateers had been expelled from the Bay of Bengal) and the harnessing of Indian informants on a larger scale.⁴⁸ Instead, the agents in this earlier Himalayan knowledge accumulation were considerably more informal and were often only recorded in passing reference.

One such group providing intelligence were those Europeans trading independently in South Asia, operating at the peripheries of Company control. The provision of information from these independent traders was deliberate, encouraged, instructed by the EIC and carefully constructed by the trader. This was the case for George Hurst, an independent merchant given permission to proceed to Bettiah by the Chief Factor at Patna on condition that he provided intelligence and reports. He was asked to ‘make enquiry in what part of the country the largest and greatest quantity of Fir trees are to be found and whether or not those parts are dependent on the Amil of Beteya [Bettiah] or the Hill Rajas,’ and furthermore to ‘forward to us immediate advices of your transactions of consequence, that we may thereby be able to transmit such further instructions to you from time to time as the nature of the service may require’.⁴⁹ During his time at Bettiah, Hurst thus had an incentive to provide a calculated account of the Himalayas, one that provided enough evidence that assured he kept his side of the bargain and allowed him to remain, whilst avoiding any detail that might induce the Company to establish their own competition in the region. This conundrum could explain early representations of the foothills as sparsely wooded, in spite of the dense oak, bamboo and rhododendron forests that exist there. Furthermore, deliberate representations of this kind could help explain why the Himalayan trade remained largely untapped in the aftermath of Plassey, despite new commercial opportunities offered by territorial expansion and easier access to the existing trade between Tibet and the Gangetic plains, with Nepal increasingly considered the likely highway.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 6a.

⁴⁷ C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.8.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.57.

⁴⁹ *Rumbold to Hurst, 15 October 1766*, in B.L. IOR/G/28/2A, Patna: Consultations (1765-1769), p.62.

⁵⁰ D.P. Choudhury, ‘British Quest for trade routes from Assam to eastern Tibet 1771-1914’, *Asian Affairs*, 64 (1977), p.180

The EIC increasingly entrusted merchants and traders with experience of the Himalayas to augment their knowledge, and there emerges from within the archives a scattering of familiar faces encountering Nepal either side of 1767 who provided information in return for personal enrichment. One such person was William Mirtle, an independent trader in northern India who specialized in timber, tar and other maritime supplies. He had already curried favour with the Select Committee earlier in 1763, providing materials required for repairs at a time when a French squadron roamed the Bay of Bengal. By March 1769, his interests and that of the Company aligned once more. He wrote to Calcutta, emphasising how he had ‘at a considerable expense obtained an entire knowledge of the hill country and fir trade there, which he alleges might be prosecuted with great advantage to the Company’. Upon offering his expertise, Mirtle was asked to investigate the feasibility with which he could ‘cut sticks for masts and yards’ as well as ‘the procuring of pitch and tar in the Morung [Morang] country’. In return, he would be granted a contract to do exactly that by the EIC, enabling him to continue his trade in the country. Alternatively, if the prospects of this endeavour did not look promising, Mirtle would be allowed to remain in India for another three years, ‘to settle his private affairs.’⁵¹ Within this example, an independent trader was able to solicit the EIC, offer his knowledge in order to secure profit for himself. He was not the only one – Francis Peacock obtained a similar monopoly in 1770, the ‘sole right for cutting firs’ in the Tista region, on the basis that he had visited the country.⁵²

A further marginal source in the construction of British colonial knowledge were the European missionaries - Jesuits and Capuchin Monks who had travelled relatively extensively in the area. Portuguese Fathers Estevao Cacella and Joao Cabral were the first Jesuits to visit Nepal, returning from Tibet through the country in 1628. Before that, others had travelled to Tibet and Bhutan. The Italian Capuchins had an intermittent presence in Kathmandu from 1707. Their contribution to colonial knowledge has not been neglected. One historian writes, ‘Christian missionaries were one of the most important channels through which the European world received historical and ethnographic information about the Orient.’⁵³ Of course, the Capuchins saw Nepal through an evangelical, missionary interpretative lens, and as such the exactitude, impartiality and truthfulness of their observations comes under scrutiny. Nor were they immune to the influence of political

⁵¹ The previous service of Mirtle and this further instruction has been drawn from B.L. IOR/E/4/619, Bengal Despatches, pp.322-324.

⁵² Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, p.400.

⁵³ Dipak Raj Pant, ‘Early Christian Missions in the Himalayas: Including a Note on the Location of Missionary Archives in Italy’, *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, no.4 (1992) p.32.

engineering and other agendas. The Capuchins were invited from Patna to Nepal Valley by emissaries of Ranajit Malla of Bhaktapur and Jaya Prakash Malla of Kathmandu. Shah had originally invited them to visit him at Nuwakot, then expelled them upon conquering the valley. In 1775, his son Singh Pratap Shah invited them back on a more permanent basis.⁵⁴ It is perhaps these shifting degrees of hospitality that explain a great degree of barbarism and cruelty in the Capuchin's information on Nepal. They are the foremost proponents of the mutilation accounts from Kirtipur.⁵⁵

The discourse of oriental despotism has already been discussed as a component of a colonialist historiography, and as the impression of one belligerent held by the other, it is critical to understanding Company reception of the Capuchin Monks' knowledge. The process of South Asian subjection to this stereotype had begun a long time ago, yet it reached a peak in the mid-eighteenth century, owing in part to the extensive philosophical analysis of Asiatic despotism in the works of Montesquieu and Boulanger who related it to the 'enervating effects of hot climates, and slavish traditions within Hinduism and Islam'.⁵⁶ Such a notion greatly served a British colonial presence – it cast the EIC as reluctant heirs to Mughal despotism, even the saviours of India regardless of whether or not they held grand designs for extensive conquest at this point.⁵⁷ It is no wonder then that it can be found within the lexicon of the EIC, for example Robert Orme's short treatise on the *General Idea of the Government and People of Indostan* written in 1753.⁵⁸ The point here is twofold. Firstly, the Capuchin monk's stories of barbarism would have chimed with existing notions of oriental despotism. Secondly, some EIC strategists would have digested these reports gleefully; the perceived threat of cruel and tyrannical Asian rulers increasingly held leverage as a flexible justification for British aggression.⁵⁹

The arrival of two figures at Bettiah in 1767 brings into discussion a further cohort of marginalized historical agents: wandering emissaries and religious ascetics. By far the most extensive account of Gorkha's conquests and Kathmandu's plight came from the messengers that Malla sent, who reportedly were able to escape the Gorkhali encirclement by disguising themselves as holy men. That vocation involved migrant travel across northern India, and religious nomads whether genuine or on political service naturally stored perceived knowledge of faraway places. For that reason, they were often asked to

⁵⁴ Dates and quotations from Pant, 'Early Christian Missions', 32-35.

⁵⁵ Father Giuseppe de Rovato, 'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', *Asiatick Researches*, 2 (1801), p.319.

⁵⁶ Robert Travers, 'Ideology and British Expansion in Bengal, 1757-72', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33:1 (2005), p.10. Also discussed in chapters I and II.

⁵⁷ Sen, 'Colonial Frontiers of the Georgian State', p.382.

⁵⁸ Orme would later be appointed Company historian in 1769. Bowen, *The Business of Empire*, p.172.

⁵⁹ Travers, 'Ideology and British Expansion', p.9.

give account, share their knowledge and shape the representations of others. These two particular travellers had a purpose. They had been asked to solicit the British, and so they did by approaching Golding at Bettiah, who then wrote on to Patna.⁶⁰ Kinloch recorded their names with little consistency, but most often as Muctan Unda and Facquir Ramdass from which Muktananda and Ram Das, the names more often adopted in Nepalese secondary literature, are derivative. They gave a very calculated account, one that played upon commercial interests and despotic concerns, and that stressed a need for intervention and urgency, as well as simplicity. They exaggerated the pace and ferocity of Gorkhali expansion, indicating the conflict had only been fought for five years, in which Shah had gobbled up ten principle cities. They indicated that Kathmandu would soon capitulate since the Gorkhalis had taken the city's chief grain supplies, and the onset of famine was imminent. Yet despite this pressing situation in which the populace suffered at the hands of Shah's war of attrition and rapid conquest, they emphasized the ease with which the Company could intervene.⁶¹

The account provided by the guides certainly augmented existing concerns for trade, and the presence of a despotic, militant regime on the borders of Bengal. Before their involvement, the Himalayan trade was not considered significant enough to warrant an intervention (Yogesh Raj argues that the anxiety of the Company officials stationed in the Tarai borders considerably increased when the Gorkhalis took control of the forts in Makwanpur in 1762 and Dhulikhel in 1763, yet we see no concern or authorization for action emanating from regional centres like Patna, let alone Calcutta.)⁶² However, such is the nature of the encounter, that this representation provided by the guides may have merged with existing knowledge on behalf of the colonial servant; a raft of expectations and possibilities. It is therefore feasible that the two guides involved in this encounter unwittingly evoked other incentives for intervention that collectively gathered velocity.

Firstly, upon their assurances that both Nepal Valley and the Kingdom of Gorkha would be no match for the EIC, it is possible that Company officials began to size up the territory for annexation. This is certainly an incentive that Nepalese accounts promulgate, some suggesting the Company were simply waiting for the opportunity in a race for territory against the anti-colonialist Shah campaigns.⁶³ Whilst such an overt EIC policy is lacking within the IOR records and Company documents, there certainly existed the simple

⁶⁰ Their note was addressed to Richard Barker, presumably Colonel Robert Barker, commander of the soldiers at Patna.

⁶¹ George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, 'A Short Account of the Present Situation of Napaul & Distress of Jay Percass Mull the Rajah, taken from his Vakeels Muctan Unda & Faquir Ramdoss', in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

⁶² Raj, *Expedition*, p.4.

⁶³ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.1.

equation: territorial acquisition gave the Company more direct control over trade. What mattered was whether the costs of securing that acquisition and then administering political control were in fact worth the output from that region, or whether it was more productive to pursue commercial interests within that region from Bengal. Prior to the messengers' representation of Nepal Valley, Company officials leaned towards the latter. Jelle Wouters for instance argues possession was not part of Britain's plans for the hills, suggesting that for mercantile reasons, the British concentrated on administering the plains, which were commercially viable in ways the 'barren' hills were not. He drew upon the later politician Dalhousie to support this: 'I dissent entirely from the policy which is recommended of what is called obtaining a control, that is to say, of taking possession of these hills, and of establishing our sovereignty over their savage inhabitants. Our possession could bring no profit to us, and would be as costly as it would be unproductive.'⁶⁴ Nevertheless the consideration, whether to conquer, always took place. 1767 was no different and messenger impressions of Nepal's military weakness were influential.

A final consideration, one that the messengers were naïve to, is how their representation of conflict and threat in Nepal evoked notions of a hostile mountainous periphery, roughly two decades after the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. Gorkhali raids had reduced some villages to destitution, echoing Border Reiver legend and Bonnie Prince Charlie's march. Shah's perceived political patronage based on fraternal, ethnic and aristocratic links mirrored perceived Highland clan structures. Reports that the Gorkhalis relied on bow and arrow perhaps could have found resonance in fabled Highlander proficiency with the claymore. (the Highlanders likewise would in the coming decades be considered a martial race – with emphasis placed on their Britishness as a means through which to suggest all British men could aspire to such martial prowess.) Kinloch himself was one of many Company servants to whom Nepal evoked a comparison with Scotland: 'I reached the very top of the mountain where I may truly say I was never so high before, although I have cross'd highest and wildest in the highlands of Scotland, yet I have found they wou'd bear no comparison with what I now saw.'⁶⁵ Kinloch would have been a young man in the Scottish Lowlands at the time of the Jacobite Uprising. Whether these parallels were accurate or wildly amiss is not wholly relevant - as Ludwig Stiller pointed out, 'it is not really significant historically how *we* regard either Nepal or the East India Company. It is how *they* saw one another.'⁶⁶ Such a converged image of Gorkhali/Jacobite, Himalaya/Highland hostility may not have been consciously created – for Kinloch, it could

⁶⁴ Wouters, 'Keeping the Hill Tribes at Bay', p.58.

⁶⁵ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 27th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 9a.

⁶⁶ Stiller, 'The Role of Fear', p.43.

have evoked childhood memories of growing up in the Scottish lowlands - but it did reinforce the perceived magnitude of the threat, and the perceived likelihood that its defeat was achievable.

The information provided by traders, priests and guides in their encounters with EIC officials in each instance was carefully crafted. This impression of Nepal collided with those officials' existing knowledge and existing concerns, sometimes in ways the informant could not likely have predicted, in what ultimately provided a vision packed with threat, risk and opportunity. The Company now had incentives for intervention, and plenty of decisions to make.

III:4 The Decision to Intervene

EIC Military intervention in South Asia was by no means guaranteed and there was a considerable argument in opposition. First and foremost, expeditions were costly and without the assurance of success were often risky. The Company had a chequered history of such gambles backfiring, from Child's War in 1686 to the more recent siege of Pondicherry in 1748 (which like the 1767 venture was struck by monsoon weather.) In the event of failure, removing those responsible would not recuperate the EIC's investment. The public stance from Company headquarters in Leadenhall Street was often decidedly cautious, since directors were eager to press an image of thrift and mercantile peacefulness. Wars cost money, and deterred investors. They brought territory to manage, and the envying eye of the British government. For these reasons, directors often fretted about rising military costs, and argued on occasion for 'pacifick measures' in dealing with Indian rulers.⁶⁷ P.J. Marshall made a case for this cautious approach: 'neither the British Government nor the Court of Directors of the East India Company believed in using force in India for commercial ends. The Company had few of the incentives for seeking political control in India which are usually attributed to exponents of economic imperialism.'⁶⁸ There were also viable alternatives in 1767, for instance the EIC could have entreated Shah to end his siege. They could have contacted and bribed one of Shah's generals, as the Company did with Mir Jafar at Plassey. Having had no contact with or loyalties to the Mallas prior to 1767, the EIC could cynically have supported the Gorkhali expansion, hoping that in return Shah would invite trade, perhaps also reinforcing an allied 'buffer' state alongside the territory of Awadh.

⁶⁷ Travers, 'Ideology and British Expansion', p.9.

⁶⁸ Marshall, 'British Expansion in India', p.30.

On the other hand, the Company certainly involved itself in inter-Indian disputes. Picking a side, assisting with military force and demanding some form of trade or financial benefit in return had been a key method of expansion since they backed the Nawab of Arcot, Anwaruddin Khan, in the 1740s, and by 1766 military expenditure accounted for forty-four percent of the EIC's budget.⁶⁹ 1767 was therefore an opportunity to showcase British military strength as a mercenary force to the Himalayan hill states and indebt the Malla Rajas, or whomever controlled the Tibet trade, to the Company. Nor were the outlined alternatives straightforward – whether diplomatic entreaties would reach Shah in sufficient time was dubious, and little was known of the Gorkhali court factions. Accomplished EIC scholar Christopher Bayly argued once that historians assume the Company was hostile towards any military enterprise or expedition on the grounds aforementioned. Yet despite the directors' public protests otherwise, there remained an intent to protect and expand with military if needs be, behind the official sovereignty of the Mughal emperor, as a 'velvet glove concealing this mailed fist'.⁷⁰

It is clear in 1767 and throughout the long eighteenth century that although not necessarily its first expedient, the Company would often play its military ace. How that measure was reached in this instance is easier to grasp once the disparity between the Company in London and the Company in Patna is considered. Those receiving Malla's letter regarded the opportunity and threat differently to those far away in Britain, with next to no experience of affairs in India, who were perhaps more reluctant to intervene. Many historians of the British Empire have argued the impetus for action, intervention and expansion came primarily from the existing frontiers, rather than the metropolis of London.⁷¹ This could apply to Kinloch and Rumbold in Bengal, where Company agents perhaps more keenly subscribed to notions of Indian barbarism and marauding in the aftermath of the slaughter of the British stationed in Patna in 1763.⁷² Likewise, they may have held a personal stake in the success of the Himalayan trade. Furthermore, being at the edge of empire may well have fostered a spirit of what Robert Travers described as 'frontier patriotism,' a 'gun-ho attitude towards protecting the Empire and challenging its enemies'.⁷³ The course of action they would likely advocate in 1767 was one of intervention to secure these interests (though not one that necessarily involved annexation.)

⁶⁹ Subramanian, *History of India*, p.56.

⁷⁰ Bayly, 'The British Military-Fiscal State', p.325 and p.331.

⁷¹ For example, D.K. Fieldhouse quoted in Subramanian, *History of India*, p.80.

⁷² The Patna Massacre, an event narrated in IOR/G/28/18 Narratives of Messrs. Campbell, Fullarton, and Anderson, of the Patna Massacre (1763).

⁷³ Travers, 'Ideology and British Expansion', p.8.

Given the potential disagreement on the question of intervention, it is important to ask who was involved in the decision-making process. The challenges of time and geography here played an important role. It is widely agreed that the six-month sailing time between London and Calcutta gave a certain flexibility and autonomy to the Company's 'men on the spot'.⁷⁴ Put simply, they could act first; account for their actions later. London did have a say in imperial decision-making - in the 1750s, the Company's servants were constantly warned against involvement with Indian powers or military adventures.⁷⁵ However, the fact that individuals so often ignored these intermittent warnings indicates the centre's critical failure to leash its peripheral agents. Moreover, with the Court of Directors so distanced from the geographical sphere in which these events unfolded, peripheral agents were very much at liberty to package these enterprises in their correspondence with London however they saw fit, placing emphasis on the level of threat if needs be, celebrating successes and neglecting to report failures. This pattern was met with suspicion, Bowen noting 'the directors suspected that information was being deliberately withheld from them by senior figures in India, and their attempt to secure what they wanted sometimes developed into an ongoing and at times bitter war of attrition between the East India House and the Presidencies'.⁷⁶

This binary of cautious and passive London Companymen, feisty and military frontier agents was not definitive: There would always be warmongers and patriots in the metropolis just as those living in close proximity to the larger Indian armies, for instance the fast-moving Maratha horsemen, whilst perhaps being stationed at an under-strength garrison themselves, would understandably be reluctant to stir trouble. Likewise, some would-be adventurers were perhaps warier of reprimands and withdrawal papers coming from London in the aftermath of a failed enterprise than others. In 1767 though, this does not seem to be the case: Kinloch proceeded without permission and Gorkha's capacity to defeat the EIC sepoys was greatly under-appreciated.

Given the many different factories governed by the EIC across South Asia at the time, with differing tendencies towards prudence or aggression, it becomes all the more challenging to pinpoint any universal British policy towards India, a notion that has been dubbed 'an elusive concept' by Marshall. Instead, he described how governors and commanders like Verelst and Kinloch had much scope for individual initiative and the development of 'sub-imperialism'.⁷⁷ Once we regard hefty decisions such as the invasion of

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.9.

⁷⁵ P.J. Marshall, 'Introduction', in Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.24.

⁷⁶ Bowen, *The Business of Empire*, p.158.

⁷⁷ Marshall, 'British Expansion', p.28 & p.37.

Nepal as a result of such sub-imperialism, then the influences upon that decision, those marginalized agents in close proximity to Kinloch, become integral to the trajectory of EIC expansion and enterprise. For that reason, it is productive to establish whether Patna was capable of exercising such independence from London. Fortunately, Patna does have a history of peripheral autonomy, and even provides a case study in the years preceding 1767, centred on an illicit opium monopoly.

EIC agents and private traders alike faced a problem in the mid-eighteenth century – the struggle to make inroads into China during a lucrative era for the tea trade. Their infamous solution was to grow opium in northern India and peddle it, against the law and order of the Qing Dynasty, either overland or by sea to the Chinese. For that reason, vast swathes of land in Bihar and Bengal began cultivating the poppy and the trade flourished. Since it was unregulated, the purchase and sale of opium represented a lucrative commercial opportunity. EIC agents and independent merchants alike stationed at Patna did not miss a trick – the factory was already widely noted for the value of its private trade.⁷⁸ In 1761, the Chief of the factory there, William McGwire, negotiated his own private monopoly independently with the local *subedar* Ram Narain by agreeing a *Parwana*. He then tried to have this arrangement legitimized by Calcutta. Governor Vansittart ordered the withdrawal of this privilege, but not before McGwire made a small fortune. His successor William Ellis continued to act independently in the opium trade, coercing local suppliers to provide the drug at considerably lower prices on the basis that the *Parwana* was still legitimate. In turn from 1765 onwards, under the chief agency of Thomas Rumbold, the Patna factors cornered the opium market in spite of Calcutta's orders against such monopolies. From this point onwards, Rumbold's inner circle lined their pockets.

This stranglehold withstood the personal intervention of Clive in August 1766. Upon being asked that it cease, Rumbold wrote back denying such a monopoly ever existed: 'Your directions with regard to the opium business shall be adhered to though we must beg leave to observe that this trade has never yet been conceiv'd here in the light of a monopoly as whoever had a proper authority & chose to purchase have always been at liberty so to.'⁷⁹ The proceedings of the Select Committee in July the following year make clear that, despite Rumbold's assurance that Clive's request would be adhered to, the illicit trade continued.⁸⁰ Ultimately, the Company itself formalized a monopoly in 1773 in an

⁷⁸ Some figures on the scale of private trade at Patna from 1725 onwards can be found in Marshall, 'British Expansion', p.33. Patna private trade profits had reached an estimated £65,000 annually by then.

⁷⁹ *Rumbold to Clive*, 27th August 1766, in B.L. IOR/G/28/2A, Patna: Consultations (1765-1769), p.51.

⁸⁰ B.L. IOR/H/196 Bengal Affairs 31st July 1767.

effort to ensure all profits went through its books.⁸¹ Those acting with disregard to earlier instructions were by and large held unaccountable. The gross profit earned on their opium purchases by this cartel has been estimated to have ranged between 175 and 300 percent.⁸² From McGuire's policy of action before permission, to Ellis's abuse of a *Parwana* that had been formally revoked by Calcutta and Rumbold's denial that such a monopoly existed, the Chief Agents at Patna had demonstrated by 1767 that they could pursue their own commercial interests in spite of directions from the Select Committee and the Governor of Bengal, let alone the Court of Directors.

There are no records from London in the months running up to Kinloch's expedition to suggest there was in fact any disparity between the Court of Director's approach and that of Kinloch, Rumbold and Verelst. This is simply because no notification of these events was received in London, in the short space of time between Malla's letter being received and the expedition setting out (we know more about London's reaction on receiving news of the expedition and its failure, which is discussed further in chapter V.) The emphasis placed on urgency perhaps dissuaded those at Patna and Calcutta from consulting the Directors, since it would have been redundant. EIC ships carrying messages 'were obliged to set forth during the annual sailing "season" determined by favourable prevailing winds and the monsoon, and the established practise was for most voyages to Asia to begin between December and April, with return legs commencing during the Autumn and early winter'.⁸³ Correspondence normally took around eighteen months. At best then, any request for authorization from Kinloch, Rumbold and Verelst would not have left India until after October 1767. Assuming the Board of Directors then received the correspondence in time and acted upon it, the earliest that the instruction to proceed could have arrived in Patna was summer 1768. If that instruction was not decided upon before the sailing season of 1768 closed, Kinloch would have had to wait until 1769, by which time Kathmandu had fallen.

Had London been given the opportunity to offer instruction, we do not know for certain whether they would have advised caution, as they often did, or whether they would have endorsed the enterprise. What we do know is that it would not have had any influence whatsoever on the liberty of those at Patna to choose the course of action they wished (despite the claim amongst Nepalese historians that Company directors at once decided to send an expedition as part of an overarching territorial design on the Himalayas.)⁸⁴ This was

⁸¹ Om Prakash, 'Trade and Politics' in Eighteenth-century Bengal', in Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.153.

⁸² Ibid., pp.153-4.

⁸³ Bowen, *The Business of Empire*, p.154.

⁸⁴ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.1.

a choice made at the periphery, based on local intelligence, according to various interests in that space. The only role Leadenhall Street played was an abstract fear, felt on behalf of the periphery, relating to the ramifications from that centre if their chosen action was to fail. Ultimately swayed by impressions of oriental despotism and threats to profit that were felt more keenly in Patna, and convinced of the chance of success, the decision was made to intervene with Bayly's mailed fist.

III:5 Plans and Preparations

This section investigates the plans made by the EIC for logistical difficulties, and the sources of advice and information upon which those plans were based. This includes what knowledge of potential routes Kinloch and his superiors prepossessed, and where that knowledge came from. The expedition's composition, the marginalized historical agents that constituted the EIC column, and the reason for their participation, is then discussed.

There was no previous EIC military experience in the Himalayas for Kinloch to draw upon, owing to their relatively new presence in the region. Instead, Kinloch continued his interviews with Ram Das and Muktananda, hoping to draw from these marginalized sources intelligence on the routes into Nepal, how the roads would be affected by the monsoons, and Gorkhali fighting strength. Kinloch willingly supported the messenger's interpretations – as a candidate to lead the expedition, he wanted to ensure the enterprise went ahead and was wary of a possible reluctance by the Select Committee to provide their seal of approval. The outcome of these discussions was an unspoken collaboration between messenger and soldier. Kinloch would nevertheless be held responsible for this outcome, and as such was careful to point out the South Asian providence of the intelligence. He frames his 'short account of the present situation in Napaul' with that caveat.⁸⁵

Kinloch provided the Committee with a route plan, including distances and summaries of marching conditions. The expedition would travel northeast from Patna through Darbhanga and Janakpur, then north into the foothills passing Sindhuli, then westwards from Khurkot to Bhaktapur in Nepal Valley, via Dumja and Dhulikhel (now known as the B.P. Koirala Highway.) He wrote that from Patna up to the foothills, 'the road is very good, from thence to Sidely [Sindhuli] is chiefly jungles through which cannon may pass without difficulty; from Sidely to Napaul the road is reckoned extremely good. In

⁸⁵ George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, 'A Short Account of the Present Situation of Napaul', in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

the march to Napaul by the route, there are no rivers to be crossed, nor any hills to be passed. It will be necessary to carry Bullocks from Derbunga [Dharbanga] to Dumjah [Dumja], at the latter place the troops will be supplied with coolies from Napaul.⁸⁶ He also asserted that ‘water and provisions are to be met with at all these stages,’ believing that ‘the Rajah will supply the troops with provisions at Daupchah [Dumja]’.⁸⁷ Within this summary are a few notable assumptions made by Kinloch – he expected good marching conditions with no major obstacles, anticipated that he would need a baggage train but only to a point where Jaya Prakash Malla could meet them with food and soldiers, and did not anticipate sustenance to be a problem.

There was no reason for Kinloch to suspect this projection, since it paralleled existing knowledge of the region: a map of India from 1762 by T. Jeffreys shows the Bagmati flowing between two mountain ranges, meeting at the Tibetan top of a downward ‘V’ with Bettiah at the open end and Kathmandu nestled in the middle. This visual interpretation significantly downplayed the challenge of the terrain between Bettiah and Kathmandu – also suggesting by the mountainous sides of the ‘V’ that there was a more prodigious mountain chain between Gorkha and Kathmandu that the Gorkhalis would have to traverse.⁸⁸ Kinloch’s plans and the intelligence upon which they were drawn were thus flawed from the outset: whilst it was impossible for the messengers to either confirm or reject Malla’s ability to provide support, they should have known for certain that regardless of the season, there would definitely be rivers and hills to cross. These challenges were omitted in their collaborative report, perhaps in fear that their inclusion would deter the EIC.

Malla’s messengers had arrived on the cusp of the monsoon season, requesting urgency. Kinloch thus had a case to investigate – what difficulties would a march through the rains incur? Were they surmountable and if so, did the situation warrant an urgent response? His verdict, again based on local assurances within the interview, was that a speedy departure would avoid the worst of the rains; such was the easy nature of the route. Much of Kinloch’s confidence came with the proviso that the expedition would depart soon, certainly before June. After that, the march would ‘be attended with greater difficulty... as the rains cause an immense growth of jungle which almost choaks up the road’. The question of whether to march at the end of monsoon season, in September as

⁸⁶ *Additional Note from George Kinloch to the President of the Select Committee, undated*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/7 Bengal Proceedings 9 Jan 1766-16 Dec 1767.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ This map can be found in Richard Owen Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India, Between the English and the French, On The Coast of Coromandel, From the Year 1750 to the Year 1761*, 2nd edn (London: T. Jeffreys, 1762), p.23.

the expedition eventually did or any other month after the rains, was not answered in his report, since he was also assured that were it to be delayed until that time, 'the whole country will undoubtedly be in possession of the Ghorkwallah.'⁸⁹

Time passed over the summer and permission to depart was not sent from Calcutta. Kinloch's preferred window came and went; he had to change his plans. Kinloch staked his reputation and commission on this decision – he lay vulnerable to military criticism having already made clear to the committee that he considered this timing unwise. It may well be Kinloch's own enthusiasm for the enterprise that accounts for this volte-face. An alternative explanation is that Kinloch once again consulted the messengers. They would not have been ignorant of travel conditions at this time of year, yet they do not appear to have offered any deterrent. We cannot know for sure if this discussion took place since there are no such records from Patna that summer. Ultimately though, the expedition set out on 26th August, precisely the time of year Kinloch had hoped to avoid.

Kinloch also presented to Calcutta his evaluation of intelligence on Shah's military strength, specifically that provided by the messengers. This included a geographical representation of Shah's operations, statistical estimates and information on the composition of Shah's Gorkha armies. The former consisted of a plan of Shah's present attack of Kathmandu and Patan. Though Kinloch did not rate the accuracy of this drawing highly, considering it 'neither plan nor perspective of profile and altogether out of proportions,' he did conclude on it that 'the terrible situation of Jay Percass [Jaya Prakash Malla] may be easily seen notwithstanding the rudeness of the work'.⁹⁰ It was drawn by Muktananda, who had also provided Calcutta with a map of the intended route, regrettably missing from the archive. It is interesting here that, despite Kinloch's complaints regarding the draughtsman's skill, the drawings were still sufficient to persuade him that the Gorkhali blockade was thorough: 'these redoubts are so contrived, that there is no parsing between them out of Arrow Shot.' He concluded though, by informing the Select Committee that 'by his accounts [Muktananda] there will be little difficulty in dispossessing him [Shah] of them'.⁹¹ Although Kinloch made clear that it is not his but Muktananda's assessment, he accepted this intelligence and the expedition would go ahead on the basis of it.

The final assessment Kinloch needed to make was that of the enemy's fighting strength. Next to nothing was known about the Gorkhalis, other than that they were an emergent force in the Himalayas that occasionally plundered villages in northern Bihar. The

⁸⁹ *George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, 'A Short Account of the Present Situation of Nepal'*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

⁹⁰ *Additional Note from George Kinloch*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/7 Bengal Proceedings 9 Jan 1766-16 Dec 1767.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

British had not previously conversed with Shah, despite his previous visit to Benares. The messengers then, provided new statistical detail: ‘with regards to the Forces of Goorkwallah they say his whole Army may be about 50,000 men, but a great part of them are employed in the defence of his country, and never more than 20,000 had been in Napaul. They are chiefly armed with Bows and Arrows.’⁹² Here Napaul referred solely to the valley, indicating to Kinloch that 20,000 would be the greatest force he would encounter, with limited firearms (the referenced bows and arrows also served to evoke savagery, reinforcing the notion that Shah was a backward, barbaric threat.) This was a calculated summary then, one that emphasized the scale of the threat to the EIC – 50,000 was no petty state army – alongside the potential for success – if they could be caught so greatly reduced and poorly armed.

His report did not thoroughly consider how the Gorkhali armies would respond to monsoon season. He assumed they would work the same way the EIC did and look for shelter, noting that Shah held ‘chains of small forts and redoubts round the places within which there are commodious houses for his people free from rain’.⁹³ Nor does Kinloch appear to have considered whether the terrain would benefit the Gorkhali, or whether they could turn it to their advantage. This omission would prove costly and Kinloch ultimately faced a far more mobile enemy than anticipated.

On conclusion of this interview, Kinloch crafted an intelligence report that emphasized the need for haste, in face of a barbaric enemy. There was potential though, from the information laid down by subaltern informants, for an easy march and an easy victory. By all means Kinloch drew attention to this information in the hope that the expedition would go ahead, but he was not the only one harbouring that hope.

III:6 The Expedition’s Components

Having assessed the available routes, timing and strength of the enemy, the EIC turned their thoughts towards the expedition’s composition. Two things necessitate an investigation into Kinloch’s entourage. Firstly, as previously noted, this was a sizeable enterprise, with most estimates situating it around 2,400, whilst the Bengal Army stood at 26,000.⁹⁴ Secondly, it is hoped that an understanding of their background may illuminate

⁹² George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, ‘A Short Account of the Present Situation of Napaul’, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

⁹³ *Additional Note from George Kinloch*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/7 Bengal Proceedings 9 Jan 1766-16 Dec 1767.

⁹⁴ These figures are taken from a contemporary letter written by Richard Barwell, February 28th, 1768. Published in *Bengal Past & Present*, 10:29 (1924), 242-248. It is reiterated by Raj, *Expedition*, p.9. Bengal Army figures taken from Phillipa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.69. Most figures do not drift far from these estimates.

their *raison d'être* in these historical circumstances – what possible duties and motivations they had may help explain why some individuals made the decisions that Kinloch attributed to them in his journal. This investigation takes its cue from the work of a growing number of historians that consider colonial exploration and expeditions as collective enterprises, involving a diverse labour force whom the ventures were dependent on, rather than a conventional emphasis on the exploits and achievements of a single heroic explorer.⁹⁵

Whilst this thesis hopes to move on from such a conventional emphasis, it does not neglect Kinloch himself completely – knowing more about the commanding officer helps readers of his journal understand his descriptions of the more marginalized historical agents. George Kinloch was born in Scotland, and belonged to the 70th Foot regiment, which he joined on February 4th 1760 as a lieutenant. He became a captain for this Madras regiment on 11th April 1764, at which point he volunteered for transfer to Bengal, arriving in May.⁹⁶ We know very little of his early life although his will, written shortly before the 1767 expedition, does give us a glimpse into his family circumstances. He hoped to divide his fortunes equally between his brother Charles, who would accompany him to Nepal, and his sister Cecilia in County Forfar. The will also stipulated that, should he die with more than four thousand pounds sterling, ten pounds would be paid annually to Christian Duncan residing in Kirrimuir, County Forfar.⁹⁷ This was potentially a ward of his.

Kinloch was chosen from a small pool of officers stationed at Patna. His known credentials reveal him to be a suitable candidate. Firstly, his seniority from April 1764 at a time of expansion for the Bengal Army meant he outranked most other more recently appointed captains. Secondly, he had experience of large detachments – letters from Colonel Champion record him in charge of five companies of European soldiers at Patna in September 1765, no small command given the considerably small number of British soldiers in India.⁹⁸ He had also excelled in the field, being picked for recognition by Major Munro, who wrote to the Select Committee, 'I hope you will also pay a due regard to his merit as also to that of Captains Hay and Kinloch with Lieutenant Duff of the Artillery who well deserve your notice,' in the aftermath of the Battle of Buxar.⁹⁹ He had also put down an uprising at Tipperah (Tripura.) His record was by no means unblemished: he is listed as taking part in the *Batta* Mutiny, wherein many European officers within the Bengal Army simultaneously handed in their notice in protest at lower field pay. The mutineers

⁹⁵ Such is the assertion of purpose in Konishi, Nugent, Shellam, eds, *Indigenous Intermediaries*, p.1.

⁹⁶ Raj, *Expedition*, p.12.

⁹⁷ *Captain George Kinloch's Will*, in B.L. IOR/P/154/53.

⁹⁸ B.L. IOR/H/198 Journal of Colonel Alexander Champion (1764-1766).

⁹⁹ *Major Munro to the Select Committee, 26th October 1764* in B.L. IOR/H/805 Papers from Bengal and Madras, p.1128.

hoped their resignation en masse would corner the EIC into offering better terms, but were foiled when Calcutta called their bluff, replacing them with Madras Army officers. Forced to re-apply, many were not re-employed and instead received a dishonourable discharge. Kinloch however was the highest-ranking officer to make Henry Verelst's 'list of officers judged worthy of being restored to service,' most likely on the basis of his commendation from Buxar.¹⁰⁰

Kinloch was likely a man of ambition. He had previously partaken in the *Batta* Mutiny on the grounds that he was not paid enough. He thought it possible for him to accumulate over four thousand pounds. He does not appear to have any immediate family, spouse or offspring. It is therefore plausible that, in the course of the first exchange with the messengers, a plan hatched in Kinloch's mind – not a plan to liberate Nepal Valley from the clutches of an 'oriental despot', but a plan to get rich. He therefore joins a cast of would-be adventurers throughout India at the time. Of course, it is difficult to know this motivation for sure. There are clues though, for instance his interest in the religious and spiritual landscape. Kinloch fills almost two sheets of his notebook with the story of the Hindu deities Ram and Sita.¹⁰¹ This could simply have been boredom on the evening of a long day's march, or curiosity. It is more likely indicative of the adventurer's ambition – knowledge of 'the Orient' was becoming increasingly high regarded and prized by the Select Committee, and would become a de-facto prerequisite for success under the governorship of Warren Hastings, who placed the following value on such knowledge:

Every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state... [I]t attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hear[t]s of our countrymen the sense of obligation and benevolence.¹⁰²

Kinloch may have been appealing to such orientalist within the EIC. He may also have considered publishing or speaking opportunities upon his return to Britain, although as outlined in chapter II, the military-career imperative for writing is more probable.

Immediately subordinate to Kinloch were his officers. We know very little of their experiences in 1767, although their actions are occasional catalysts. It is likely that they were from the same group of adventurer-soldiers, and some of them likewise held

¹⁰⁰ *List of officers judged worthy of being restored to service, 2nd June 1766*, in B.L. IOR/H/739 Papers of Henry Verelst, Governor of Fort William Bengal (1759-1785) p.74.

¹⁰¹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 14th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 15a.

¹⁰² Warren Hastings quoted in Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.45.

commissions during the *Batta* mutiny, for instance Ensign Hardy, who was not involved. For all though, pay was a concern and would have been a motivation to join Kinloch: the *batta* itself was a perk of the job; the principle being that soldiers in the field or on expedition received higher wages. It had been considerably higher in 1757 when the officers of Patna requested it be doubled, arguing that their barracks were more or less 'in the field' continuously at that time.¹⁰³ The Select Committee staunchly opposed this, and continued to erode it, replacing it with a flat rate in 1768.¹⁰⁴ Officers based at Patna in the summer of 1767, having seen their *batta* reduced over the years then hearing rumours that plans were afoot to erase it, may have considered the Nepal expedition an opportunity to cash in.

There was also a small detachment of European soldiers, recruits mostly but not exclusively from Britain who had signed up for service. The regular pay, food and pension that the military provided would have appealed to many regardless, yet Company service in particular developed a further reputation for riches and a lax disciplinary record that the British Army did not offer. Estimates suggest there were three companies, or three hundred of these soldiers in Kinloch's entourage. This was not a small contingent – it would not be until 1769 that the number of European soldiers in the Bengal Army reached 3000.¹⁰⁵ Whilst they would have chosen EIC service, they did not choose to march to Nepal. They may have hoped to share the spoils of war, and enjoyed the *batta* that came from this deployment, yet they certainly would never have encountered mountainous terrain on this scale before and would potentially miss the relative comforts of Patna. The same applies to the officers.

By far the expedition's greatest numerical components were the sepoy units: South Asian recruits who numbered amongst Kinloch's ranks in the thousands. This phenomenon has generated a rich historiography, to which Seema Alavi, G.J. Bryant, Dirk Kolff, and Channa Wickremesekera have made important contributions that the following paragraphs draw upon.¹⁰⁶ The first observation made by these histories is that the EIC's

¹⁰³ *Extracts from Bengal Public Consultations*, in B.L. IOR/MIL/5/404 Department Special Collections, Collection 221. p.390.

¹⁰⁴ Copy Correspondence and proceedings on *batta* allowances, in B.L. IOR/MIL/5/404 Department Special Collections, Collection 221. p.418.

¹⁰⁵ Stiller, 'The Role of Fear', p.58.

¹⁰⁶ Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); G.J. Bryant, 'Indigenous Mercenaries in the Service of European Imperialists: The Case of the Sepoys in the Early British Indian Army, 1750-1800,' *War in History*, 7:1 (January 2000); Dirk Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput, and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Channa Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops in the World: British Perceptions and the Making of the Sepoy 1746-1805*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002).

success would not have been possible without their recruitment and labour. In 1767 they would have had more experience of South Asian warfare and marching conditions than the British soldiers. Most were recruited from upland regions – Jats from the north, Marathas from the west for example (and later, ‘Gurkhas’ from Nepal).¹⁰⁷ Some may have previously served with Mir Kasim of Bengal in his invasion of Nepal in 1763, since from Plassey onwards the Company relied heavily on the same recruitment base of upper-caste peasantry in northern India, Bengal and Bihar.¹⁰⁸ They may have then signed up with the EIC in the aftermath of Buxar and defeat of Mir Kasim. This potential upland background did not guarantee any proficiency in the Himalayan foothills – very few would have had such experience. What is more important is that the Company believed them well suited, and were reliant on their martial labour regardless.

Beyond a dependence on the sepoy in meeting their own needs, Alavi has further explored EIC incentives for the recruitment of South Asian military labour. One argument made was that the sepoys were recruited precisely because they might otherwise have resisted, targeting specific regions and groups in order to ‘soak up those who might otherwise disrupt the stability upon which hinged British political and economic aims’.¹⁰⁹ A related further incentive was that the sepoys had close links to peripheral communities, helping the British to ‘forge closer ties with rural society’.¹¹⁰ Through the individual sepoy’s connection to the village, the EIC could disseminate a message of employment opportunities and power, whilst also asserting control over that individual: their family and livelihood remained within EIC territory, should the sepoy choose to mutiny. Whether that message was effective is subject to debate.

Over-emphasizing EIC dependence on sepoy service can overshadow a consideration of the sepoys’ own interests – why they would opt to fight for the *Company Bahadur*, an enquiry into the chain of decisions that resulted in their fighting for British masters, far from home in the Himalayan foothills. Sepoys were not necessarily paid more by the EIC than by Indian rulers, but they were paid more frequently.¹¹¹ This was enhanced by a number of add-ons, such as the previously discussed *batta* field pay that initially applied to all marches away from barracks but on proving too costly was amended, not without complaints, to mean campaigns outside EIC territory. There is some suggestion

¹⁰⁷ Stein, *A History of India*, p.220.

¹⁰⁸ Bose and Jalal, eds, *Modern South Asia*, p.67.

¹⁰⁹ Douglas M. Peers, review of *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in North India, 1770-1830*, by Seema Alavi, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56:2 (May, 1997), p.513.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.514.

¹¹¹ Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p.43.

from contemporaries, such as Richard Owen Cambridge writing in 1762, that the *batta* was not simply for service abroad or in the field, but for service ‘in any country where garrison provisions are scarce’.¹¹² Sepoys serving in Bihar prior to the autumn harvest during the monsoon might then expect this payment. Mir Jafar as Nawab of Bengal was considered generous with *batta* payments, and commanded armies in the region both alongside and against the EIC until his death in 1765. The Nawab of Awadh likewise paid field pay constantly after 1777, reducing the incentive for sepoy to defect to the EIC on these grounds. However, such rival terms of service on behalf of Indian princes were not tabled in the intervening years, and during that time the EIC did not experience a shortage of volunteers, as General Clavering observed, ‘I never heard that there have been any difficulty in recruiting our battalions of sepoy, on the contrary the regularity of our payment and the credit of our discipline makes the Company’s a favourite service.’¹¹³ Clavering should have accounted for such favourable service by the regularity of Company payment *in spite* of its discipline rather than alongside it, but nevertheless the ease with which regiments were replenished stands testament to the veracity of his observation.

In addition, there was the no small matter of prize money, all the jewels, gold and trinkets a sepoy could expect, either after its cash value had been calculated and shared out or potentially before, if they were quick to the scene untended and feeling opportunistic (needless to say, European recruits were much the same.) Prize and reward were often used as an enticement to sepoy, particularly by their own commanding *subedars* or religious leaders, as Alexander Champion lamented of a *Mulla* in 1765, ‘the most lavish promises were previously made to soldiers. They were told their cartouche boxes should be filled; that they should be loaded with rupees.’¹¹⁴ Life at the Patna barracks would consist of regular pay and food, but also regular drills and observation. An escapade to Nepal Valley on the other hand, whose Malla rulers were famous for their competing displays of wealth, combined with the potential for prize money, could appeal. It was an enticement that the EIC increasingly found alarming and sought to discourage amongst European and sepoy units – in preparing for his upcoming campaign against the Rohillas years later in 1774, Champion wrote to assure Hastings that this time around, ‘not the most distant hint of reward has been given.’¹¹⁵

The sepoy were not exclusively motivated by pay. The military was traditionally a high caste career, a peak in masculinity and prestige. Alternatively, the more insightful

¹¹² *Glossary*, in Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*.

¹¹³ B.L. IOR/H/235 Oudh.

¹¹⁴ B.L. IOR/H/198 Journal of Colonel Alexander Champion (1764-1766) 8th March 1765.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7th June 1774.

sepoys would potentially consider the trajectory of EIC power: the British were very often winning. Service could bring increased pride and increased security. They may have relished the chance for adventure, no different to the British soldiers in this respect – few would have been well travelled, since travel over large bodies of water threatened observations of caste, and jeopardized the integrity of that to an individual. At this stage, well before campaigns to Burma or China, Company service could offer an experience of new places (along with the aforementioned additional pay outside Company territory) without that risk. On the other hand, it may have been precisely the opposite: the option to remain in service within Bihar, rather than further afield. The battle of Buxar had seen the Nawab of Bengal's armies crushed and diminished – from that point on, serving under an Indian employer's banner would involve travel to Lucknow or Delhi. Local employment effectively became Company employment. The more reluctant sepoy could have been pushed towards military service rather than drawn, as society and labour reshuffled under EIC rule. For example, EIC acquisition of the *divani* in 1765 saw an increased fervour for taxation, as Company representatives and tax officials sought to calculate how much they should or could extract from increasingly dispossessed countryside landowners. Others pushed into military service included merchants and their staff, forced out of business under pressure to sell goods at disastrously cheap rates to the increasing numbers of rogue British agents and soldiers.

Once enlisted, the sepoy like their British counterparts did not choose for their company to be sent to Nepal. Their collaboration with that enterprise – the balance between subordination, discipline and threat, offset by prize money, adventure and reward, becomes critical. The spectre haunting their involvement would be one of loyalty – would the sepoy turn mutineer? Would they desert? Those stationed at Patna had a tainted history of this. During Mir Kasim's rebellion in 1764 two sepoy regiments took their arms and marched to join the deposed Nawab of Bengal after having a request for higher pay rejected. They were captured and returned, and the EIC blew the ringleaders from cannons in front of a full parade ground. Discipline was restored and insubordination distilled in time for the Battle of Buxar.¹¹⁶ However, such retribution did not resolve the initial discontent. Instead, punishments like this could do one of two things: as intended, it could deter an individual from deserting or mutinying against the British in the first place; yet it could also lead to simmering resentment, ensuring that the next time an individual still discontented with their pay decided to run or turn, they would consider the time and place wisely.

¹¹⁶ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.125.

In accounting for the involvement of Indian soldiers in 1767, it is not intended to homogenize the sepoy. The so far outlined background of the sepoys and reasons why they may have found themselves serving within the EIC ranks wrongly give the impression that they acted and reacted as a unit. The pull towards each of those factors for each individual could well vary wildly and shall be demonstrated in later chapters, the 1767 expedition offers a rare opportunity to analyse instances in which individuals broke the mould and acted differently.

There was an important vacancy – the position of the guide. There were plenty of candidates in Patna: agents who had previous experience of leading EIC forces, or Biharis with local knowledge. However, it was Ram Das and Muktananda who had manoeuvred themselves into position as the forerunners. Having already provided the logistical details that ensured the expedition went ahead, they now assured Kinloch they could complete the job on pain of death: ‘With regard to the march to Napaul in the rainy season, they both declare and offer to forfeit their lives, that there will be no impediment from that now, a month, or three weeks since, & offer the same pledge to carry the Party safe to Napaul.’¹¹⁷ These two individuals had already played a crucial role, and now having secured further employment, would continue to do so. It becomes pertinent to ask who exactly these individuals were, willing to bear messages, offer their knowledge, and ultimately offering to accompany an expedition back to Kathmandu? Why volunteer? What benefit did it offer them?

An expedition’s guide led the way, acting as cultural interpreter, translator, and navigator. They had the ear of the commanding officer – an EIC servant visibly distinguished by his clothing, accommodation, authority and control over the expedition’s finances. From this position they could command respect, gain leverage, or act as a go between for other South Asian participants on the expedition. They could be highly valued, protected, fed and accommodated. It was by no means easy, the guides were not held in any position of prestige by the British officers – they would not sit at the same table, they would be held accountable, even for the errors of others. However, if they could perform their duties in conducting a formidable military force from one place to another, they could do so in relative comfort and be soundly rewarded in financial reimbursement. In the case of 1767 it could then lead to further reward from Jaya Prakash Malla, and further employment. This opportunity appealed to Muktananda and Ram Das. Having fulfilled their mission in delivering Jaya Prakash Malla’s letter and having witnessed the perceived

¹¹⁷ George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, ‘*A Short Account of the Present Situation of Napaul*’, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

might of the EIC, they then considered how much they stood to gain simply by following one's own footsteps back to Nepal, in the company of Kinloch, his entourage and their firearms.

Alternatively, it may have been a condition of their employment in the first place; they may have been awaiting payment by the Malla Raja and were thus financially obligated to return. Perhaps service was not considered rendered unless they returned with soldiers in tow. We do not know for sure though that these individuals were in fact Malla's denizens. They had the raja's confidence to be entrusted with the call for assistance, yet they may have been selected from amongst his courtiers precisely because they were outsiders: Nepalese historian Baburam Acharya has speculated that Muktananda was a Kashmiri Muslim courtier, a social group from which many ambassadors and *munshis* serving the EIC would increasingly be drawn.¹¹⁸ Ram Das was reportedly a *Vairagi*, a *Gosain* who travelled throughout northern India, who with Muktananda allegedly thwarted the Gorkhali blockade by disguising themselves as *fakirs*.¹¹⁹ This would not have easily achieved were they known as close confidants of Jaya Prakash Malla, or easily recognized as Kathmandu courtiers, surely the case if Muktananda was indeed a member of the Kashmiri elite. If Acharya was correct in his identification of the guides, then neither were duty-bound to return to Nepal. Instead, they would have made the choice to do so despite having seen the threat posed by the Gorkhalis. They would have weighed the risks incurred against the rewards of service, and chosen to stay. Ram Das on the other hand was very likely Nepalese – of the two it is the *fakir* who Kinloch turned to for local information.

The expedition also recruited *barkaras* - a labour force of running-messengers and spies. Some were officials of royal households or direct dependants of magnates and British officials. Others formed 'intelligence communities' organized under headmen or merchants who were then contracted by anyone who could afford their services. EIC use of these agents was pitiful before 1785, with some sizeable enterprises only recruiting a handful of poorly paid runners. Their importance was increasingly recognized during the campaigns against Mysore and the Marathas.¹²⁰ If the *barkaras* in 1767 were drawn from the labour pool of British magnates and officials at Patna, they may have been more trusted and may have proven themselves before. Though that was still no guarantee they would continue that service, it did mean they would be promised greater incentives and pay (although if Kinloch himself employed them, it is likely that they were in fact of lower status and pay, as

¹¹⁸ According to Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.84.

¹¹⁹ Raj, *Expedition*, p.23. *Fakirs* were travelling holy men.

¹²⁰ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, pp.60-63.

was customary of *barkaras* serving British military officers.)¹²¹ If they were drawn from the alternative option though, an ‘intelligence community’ in Patna that was more mercenary, their service could be duplicitous, as was the case with the *Bedar* community, settled a few miles outside of Seringapatam, whose members served both Tipu Sultan and the British.¹²²

The better trained *barkaras* were paid more and thus considered more dependable. That training involved running in hostile, challenging territory. Unless of course, they were pressed into service, which would have had the opposite effect on their dependability. In this earlier era before British intelligence developed, *barkaras* were often employed due to their travelling experience, meaning they could have been in contact with Nepalese, Gorkhali and British officials before 1767, and could have had opportunity to solicit service from each. There are figures moreover that show other Indian states within the Himalayan border region employing *barkaras* in vast numbers. The Nawab of Awadh alone was estimated to have around 20,000 in the 1770s, roughly one to every two soldiers, and considerably more than the Mughal Emperor with reputedly 4,000 *barkaras*.¹²³ Unfortunately, there is not enough evidence within Kinloch’s journal and other sources to say for sure who the *barkaras* accompanying the 1767 expedition were. However, in this earlier era before the EIC mastered the importance of the running-spy, they would not have been well paid or skilled.

There was also a detachment of *coolies*, *lascars* and builders who would have been commanded by an officer of engineers. The journal never reveals who this officer was. Their relationship with the workforce, as well as the labourers’ inclusion in Kinloch’s entourage was critical since in the past, sepoys had proven reluctant and resistant to the provision of such labour. This was the case during the siege of St George Fort during the Carnatic Wars, wherein Colonel Lawrence was able to threaten punishment to the offending minority of sepoys whilst within the confines of the besieged fort, surrounded by many European soldiers: ‘finding that the soldiers on the working parties were somewhat unruly, the governor gave out immediate orders that all people employed should strictly obey my orders... and in case of neglect, be severely punished’. This was promptly followed by the execution of such a sepoy.¹²⁴ Kinloch was not however in such a position. This group would have been responsible for portage in the plains – Kinloch was assured by Jaya Prakash’s messengers that Nepalese porters would join them at Darbhanga, releasing many coolies from service.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.61.

¹²² Ibid., p.61.

¹²³ Bayly cites this figure with the cautionary note that it is ‘extremely unreliable’, *Empire and Information*, p.33.

¹²⁴ J. Call, *A Journal of the Siege of Fort St. George, Begun the 12th December 1758, ended 17th February 1759*, in Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*, p.162.

Finally, there is potentially the largest, and certainly the least mentioned cohort of the expedition – the caravan of families, merchants, and other camp followers. The impact of this group is so often under-estimated. We know next to nothing about the specifics, since this was a group for which there are no recorded figures. In particular, the limiting power structures of the time allowed for a male hegemony over all written sources derivative from these encounters, and Kinloch and his contemporaries seldom mentioned women or their actions. This is a difficulty lamented by other historians writing on the wider region. Benjamin Hopkins for example, reflecting on his own work on the Afghan-Pakistan borderlands, pointed out that ‘nowhere is [the silence of the archival record] more clearly seen in this manuscript than in its lack of detailed consideration of the role played by women’s agency in the making of the frontier’ adding that the archives in which he worked had ‘thrown little light on this critical dimension of the Frontier’s spatial dimension’.¹²⁵ However, they were undoubtedly present for a significant proportion of the expedition. Non-belligerents would normally include women and children, merchants of all kinds of supplies, brothel keepers and prostitutes, religious figures (perhaps not dissimilar to the *Mulla* who promised the sepoys prize-money in 1765,) livestock and herdsman. There may have also been some spies amongst them. It is possible that the caravan for the 1767 enterprise was relatively small given the time of year and terrain. To endure those hardships in pursuit of profit was a choice made by some of these followers, particularly the merchants and itinerant holy men. Many, such as those employed by others, servants, bonded-labourers, and family members, would not have had that choice and could have been extremely reluctant participants. Though rarely mentioned, the caravan accompanied Kinloch most of the way to Nepal, until the topographical challenges ahead forced them to remain at Janakpur. Before that juncture, their unspoken presence certainly played a part that the ensuing chapter hopes to reconstruct.

III:7 Conclusions

Kinloch’s confidence ahead of his march now draws cringes. He boasted in his correspondence to the Select Committee that ‘neither the hills nor rivers will obstruct’.¹²⁶ He did not believe the landscape posed a problem, with full optimism that the European-style EIC army would be able to traverse these obstacles. This was in part the arrogance of an adventurer and calculations of a man eager to make his mark, in part a result of the

¹²⁵ Hopkins and Marsden, *Fragments*, p.14.

¹²⁶ George Kinloch to Select Committee, June 1767, ‘*A Short Account of the Present Situation of Napaul*’, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

impression he had received by subaltern informants, whose own agencies and interests were likewise at work in this knowledge transfer process. He did not consider the difficulties that such a large entourage would involve and there is little content within his journals that considers its composition and interests. Nor did he anticipate the living landscape – that the people within these spaces were not passive and that all three parties: the local Bengali and Nepalese, the expedition and the landscape, would clash and interact as different characters competed, collaborated and resisted. The next chapter charts these collisions.

Chapter IV – ‘This Day Set Out’: Marginalized Agency within the 1767 Expedition

Summary

Between Patna and Kathmandu lay rivers and floodwaters, villages and towns, jungles, chasms and steeped hillsides, the most challenging of terrains ever travelled by EIC forces in South Asia. This chapter uses Kinloch’s journal alongside other sources, taking the expedition day-by-day, highlighting any instance in which a marginalized character, sometimes fitting into the ‘subaltern’ description, had an influence on the expedition that has previously been neglected. That action will then be accounted for by considering the information available on that marginalized historical agent and historical circumstance, as the column progressed through the agricultural lands of northern Bihar, across the Tarai jungle, then into the Himalayan foothills. The chapter is chronological, following the expedition’s narrative. It is further structured by subsections on specific topics, or groups of historical agents, through which agency and influence is explored. These include flood management, food supply, local support in the face of a military column, foothills communities, and the Gorkhalis, before returning to the expedition’s own components: guides, messengers, and sepoys.

IV:1 Flood Management and Flooding in Bihar

The expedition set out from Patna on 26th August 1767. They would march from there to Darbhanga, then Janakpur. Despite any notions of wilderness that Kinloch may have harboured, hinted towards by his comparisons with the Scottish Highlands, it was not a march into uninhabited territory. Now part of Bihar, the region in 1767 was part of the Bengal province. Whilst James Rennell’s Bengal Atlas estimates a village to square mile ratio of at least 0.64 to 1.71, Rajat Datta estimated the population of what is now Bihar as ten million in 1790, no small number considering that the rest of the Bengal province was considered densely populated at twelve million.¹

Whilst the British had an established trading presence in the region at Patna since the 1650s, it was only in 1765 that de facto political control was established there with the grant of the *diwani*. Northern Bengal at the time of Kinloch’s march was experiencing for the first time the ‘dual government,’ wherein the existing local rulers retained their styles

¹ Rajat Datta, ‘The Agrarian Economy and the Dynamics of Commercial Transactions’ in Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century*, p.414.

and dignitaries, receiving a stipulated annual income, whilst the Company administered the government and collected revenues through Indian officials.² Changes were afoot; and whilst some were empowered, others were not. Take for instance the Company's new approach towards textile manufacture. Bengal and Bihar were divided into segments, each with production centres and procurement stations, from which the local *Gumashtas* in Company employment were able to impose buying rates upon the weavers and producers. The *Gumashta* system enabled that class of intermediaries to grow wealthy and prestigious, greater regional profits being rewarded with a greater salary. Yet it also chained the small-scale weavers and artisans to the purchasing prices and terms set by EIC officials, often considerably below the market value and rates they could hope to achieve in the earlier era of competing British, Dutch and French buyers.³

The towns and villages of northern Bihar that the expedition travelled through were not completely enthralled to the Company's manufacturing needs, also harbouring commercial and agrarian ties.⁴ This was certainly the case at Darbhanga and Janakpur. There, changing prices for foodstuffs and pressure from Company officials to grow cash crops such as opium and after indigo after 1777 forced many growers towards money-lenders. Whilst agrarian communities mostly composed of small-scale growers begrudgingly welcomed the wolf to the fold, Bengali bankers saw opportunity in high-interest loans that could enthrall producers into a debt cycle.

The physical embodiment of the Company was not necessarily the red-coated sepoy, but the note-taking Bengali official. Subaltern agents certainly demonstrated an ability to attribute detrimental change to the EIC without observing explicit European presence, for instance in their support of Mir Kasim's uprising. Such insight however, and the direction of community ire towards the EIC and its soldiers, should not be assumed. This territory was not simply hostile or loyal, dependent or disinterested. These changes were as much a catalyst of EIC expansion as they were a result of it, since they pushed farmers and weavers towards Company contracts, former manufacturing and agrarian labourers towards Company employment. Yet they did not necessarily stabilize or cement EIC authority and rule, stirring resentment that could lead to subversion and non-co-operation. Therefore, upon finding an individual or marginalized social group in a position of agency in their encounter with the 1767 expedition, it is important to consider how they may have related to these political-economic changes in northern Bengal. These are considerations that Kinloch himself did not note in his journal and may not have made –

² Stein, *A History of India*, p.203.

³ Prakash, 'Trade and Politics', p.151.

⁴ Alavi, 'Introduction', p.16.

instead being burdened by pre-existing expectations of the landscape and people within it. It has previously been noted how agrarian societies in colonized countries, in particular the peasantry, 'became repositories for all the cultural presuppositions that allegedly made those societies incapable of modern self-government and hence justified the paternal authoritarianism of Western colonial rule.'⁵ For Kinloch, this could include deceit and laziness, both the spectre of agrarian rebellion and a passivity under the yoke of despotism, since the South Asian peasantry were considered easily influenced. Therefore, whilst Kinloch's tone is often either suspicious or dismissive (referring to both their 'villainy', as well as their being 'timourous, harmless people') the marginalized agents that he encountered are not automatically considered hostile to the Company.⁶

The first instance in which marginalized agency helped direct the events of 1767 is the expedition's ongoing struggle against nature: the immense floodwaters before them and the failed human management of that force. By the point of Kinloch's departure at the end of monsoon season, the deluge broke the banks of the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and all the large rivers of Northeast South Asia. This occurred annually with more or less severity depending on the rainfall, though northern Bihar and Bengal were particularly vulnerable, being augmented by the melt of the Himalayan snows into the north-south flowing Gandak and Kosi rivers, and their changing course. James Rennell's personal correspondence sets the scene in Bengal, 1765:

The country for nearly 70 miles near Dacca is entirely overflown during the months of July, August, and September, so that the towns and villages are only very small islands, and have a communication with each other by small boats. This phenomenon is occasioned by the overflowing of the Ganges and Brahmaputrey and without it the country would be parched up during the whole year. The food of the country being entirely rice, this annual inundation saves them the trouble of watering their lands, and keeping them in the state required for the production of that grain.⁷

Whilst the waters helped irrigation, they also damaged settlements and required careful flood defence management. This included an intricate network of ditches, dams and raised causeways across northern India. One commentator, in a tract entitled *The Art of Poolbundy, or Management of the Pools*, laid down before the Select Committee on 28th June 1787, described a thousand-mile flood embankment that encircled an entire island-district. Whilst

⁵ Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nation and Its Peasants', in Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies*, p.9.

⁶ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 11th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 27a, and 15th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 17a.

⁷ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, p.147.

this was perhaps an overstatement, such defences would nevertheless represent a remarkable feat of engineering.⁸ These needed repairs each year, before the monsoons. If a neighbourhood could not cover the costs of repairs, the land became inundated. Payment, finding the labour and organising the works was traditionally the responsibility of the local landowner. In Company territory, the work was frequently contracted to private engineers.

The success of flood defences was highly politicized. In fact, in the years following the 1767 expedition we find the abuse of flood defence contracts discussed at the highest level, featuring in the trial of Warren Hastings. Amongst the charges brought against the former Governor-General by Edmund Burke was an accusation surrounding the allocation of *Poolbundy* contracts in 1777. In the district of Burdwan, the *Poolbundy* contract had previously been granted to the local raja as the traditional political power, who was paid 25,000 rupees a year from the Bengali Nawab's office. After Buxar the EIC became responsible for the allocation of this contract. Hastings upon its renewal awarded it to Archibald Frazer, who was to be paid a sum of 120,000 rupees the first year, 80,000 for the second. Frazer was also granted the sole permission to judge whether one-off, special repairs were required, then bill the Company government upon their completion. Upon the contract's expiry, it was renewed at a flat rate of 80,000, for three years.

Burke noted that the position had not been advertised, and that the cost and length of the contract rendered it disadvantageous to the EIC. He pointed towards a survey completed by Mr Kinloch, *Superintendent of Poolbundy Affairs* (no relation to the Kinloch of 1767) which estimated the annual cost of Frazer's contract at 119,401 rupees, once special repairs had been calculated. Kinloch concluded that whatever extraordinary and unusual damages the defences had received, sustained either through neglect on behalf of the Raja of Burdwan or particularly heavy rains, warranted the first-year sum of 120,000, but not the high costs of 80,000 to 119,401 thereafter. Hastings was then said to have agreed on this, but continued Frazer's contract regardless, despite a competing bid at 60,000 rupees by a Mr Thomson. Furthermore, Burke questioned the additional stipulation: that Frazer was allowed to create work for himself in special circumstances despite having already been granted the contract on the basis that he kept the defences perfect seemed highly suspicious. He called into question Frazer's suitability for the contract, being a Justice Officer without local knowledge on construction experience, and alleged corruption on behalf of the Governor-General.⁹ Hastings infamously escaped these charges at great legal

⁸ B.L. IOR/H/47 Collections for a History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. p.25.

⁹ Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, Vol.6 (Boston: Wells & Lily, 1826) pp.420-422.

cost. The relevance of this episode to the 1767 narrative is that there is the indication that Company agents prioritized profit over effective or cost-efficient flood management.

A local political authority's failure to finance and deliver flood defences could cause unrest and conflict, sometimes directed at the EIC. It was certainly a grievance held by the Raja of Tanjore (present day Thanjavur in southern India) when he petitioned to the Company in 1764, a sequence of events documented by Richard Owen Cambridge. The Raja already had an uneasy relationship with the British and the French prior to this. Tanjore was moved to alliance with the former due to the threat of the latter, alongside Mysore. This new alliance then halted the Raja's own designs to 'carry fire and sword' to the country immediately south, Madurai, also allied to the EIC.¹⁰ His complaint in 1764 however stemmed from a disagreement over flood defences. The Nawab of Arcot to whom he was subordinate had not allowed him the resources to repair the banks that held back the river Kaveri. He requested the EIC intervene, and use their considerable influence and leverage over the Nawab to ensure the flood defences were repaired. It is clear that the EIC favoured Mohamed Ali Khan of Arcot over the Raja of Tanjore from the terms in which Cambridge described them both.¹¹ Their refusal of the latter marks the first in a series of sour turns in their relationship that led to war between them within a decade.¹²

Flooding, the measures taken to prevent it, allocating those responsible for building defences, and the trials and tribulations of travel during the monsoon months all converged in 1767. Campaigns were often drawn to a halt during the rains. The Bengal Army had recent experience of this in 1767 – it greatly hindered the 1763 and 1764 campaigns – Major Carnac wrote at this point 'our troops have suffered so much from the former wet campaign as not to have strength sufficient to bear the fatigues of another'.¹³ Yet Kinloch set out regardless, having been assured the floodwaters were passable. They were worse than expected, Kinloch noting in his journal how he 'had certain intelligence that the Country before me was overflow'd for 7 Coss by the quantity of water in the Bagmutty [Bagmati], which, the Facquier my guide had all along assur'd me, he could carry me round, however he now found it impossible'.¹⁴ The flood waters were evidently higher than Ram Das expected. Any local resentment on these grounds would be targeted towards those responsible for ensuring they were well maintained – whom we learn from Kinloch's

¹⁰ Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*, p.102.

¹¹ Ibid., pp.107-108.

¹² B.L. IOR/H/772 Miscellaneous papers collected by Thomas Wilks (1765-1771), p.7.

¹³ *Major Carnac to the Select Committee, 10 June 1764* in B.L. IOR/H/805 Papers from Bengal and Madras, p.1100.

¹⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 30th August 1767, Book 1, Folio 2b.

journal was ‘a local Phousdar who collects and pays his revenue to the Government at Patna’.¹⁵ In other words, the new *diwan* – the EIC.

Kinloch needed help. He needed to move a sizeable army across rivers and floodwaters. He needed transportation, which the Company itself did not supply. Instead, he would need to commandeer boats from the local population. Consider the situation: the flooding was worse than the EIC and potentially also the South Asian guides had expected indicating defences had failed. The local political authority, the EIC, had failed to provide money and labour that could have alleviated this. Taxes had been raised and labour recruited, but it had been diverted to the military, not *poolbundy*. Now, that military force struggled to cross the very same waters that alternative spending could have prevented, requesting help from those living in the flood plains, the very people whose settlements would have been better protected. Consider furthermore that from Tanjore there is a precedent of discontent towards the EIC’s role in failed flood defences spilling into war with the Company, let alone non-co-operation upon request to supply boats. Consequently, we find in Kinloch’s journal not simply a failure by the villagers to provide the boats, but a failure to provide them despite a promise to do so. Kinloch ‘had sent several times before my march from Patna to Darbhanga for Boats to be provided for Crossing the Bagmutty, [Bagmati] and sent to Sandy Gaut [potentially Sandy Ghat]. I had accordingly advice that all which be got were waiting for me there’.¹⁶ Perturbed by this, he made new arrangements en route, sending out scouts ‘to prepare canoes for the carriage of the Guns’ ... on my arrival I found only one prepared for the guns and a single Canoe’.¹⁷

Contracting for transport by boat predated colonial rule in India, and boatmen were already established as contractors in 1767. By the 1780s there were an estimated 300,000 working the rivers, according to James Rennell.¹⁸ However, it was not until the early 1770s that the EIC moved towards allocating regional riverine transport contracts, a system recently carefully researched by Nitin Sinha.¹⁹ Before that, and during the summer of 1767, they operated a fixed rate establishment, offering payment for service on an *ad hoc* basis. This system incurred great costs: over half a million rupees annually.²⁰ For that reason the Company notoriously reverted to the use of force, placing a demand on the local villages, which Sinha has demonstrated were consequently deserted at the sight of the

¹⁵ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 26th August 1767, Book 1, Folio 1b.

¹⁶ Ibid., 31st August 1767, Book 1, Folio 3a.

¹⁷ Ibid., 29th August 1767, Book 1, Folio 2a.

¹⁸ Quoted in Nitin Sinha, ‘Contract, Work, and Resistance: Boatmen in Early Colonial Eastern India, 1760s to 1850s’ *International Review of Social History*, 59:S22 (December, 2014), p.13.

¹⁹ Sinha, ‘Contract, Work, and Resistance’.

²⁰ Ibid., p.13.

sepoys.²¹ There is no indication that Kinloch demanded the supply of boats in 1767, but nor is there indication that he offered a fixed rate payment for them.

It was not simply the provision of boats, but that of *dandies*, the labour at the oars, that Kinloch required. Whether they would volunteer depended on the nature of the work, the terms of service and the employer. Often, *dandies* deserted or did not turn up. One traveller wrote: 'one fertile reason of boatmen's desertion was the ill conduct of Europeans, who often stimulated them to do which, in their weak and clumsy boats, were really dangerous, and against all law or right, beat them when they refused or hesitated.'²² In 1767, crossing many sepoys, supplies and artillery over burst rivers and floodwaters would represent considerable risk to prospective *dandies*. Moreover, these arrangements often involved payment to an agency in advance, the boatmen likewise receiving half their fee beforehand.²³ Kinloch does not mention such a payment, and would later prove to be a severe employer.

It is possible that there were no boats, or *dandies* available to row them – that the local population did intend to support the Company expedition in agreement for a fixed rate, but found they had no resources spare. However, such a scenario could then increase resentment towards the new EIC authority, able to fund soldiers but not the *poolbundy* repairs. Moreover, the local suppliers did not simply refuse because they could not or did not want to co-operate. Instead, they gave the impression, or at least *someone* gave Kinloch the impression, that the boats would be supplied. Without *dandies*, the *coolies* could have been tasked with rowing and navigating, but these were skills they would not have, leading to a slower pace and greater risk of accident. This had a great impact, Kinloch lamenting 'the time we were crossing here, some of our canoes being lost and three people drown'd obliged me to halt'.²⁴ Eventually he found ten large boats with which the column crossed the waters in waves, each one taking twenty-six hours.²⁵ The lost lives and time would prove critical later on, giving the Gorkhalis further time to reinforce and prepare.

At this point, on 3rd September, Kinloch met an Italian missionary, Padre Mark. (Padrey Merk in B.L. Mss Eur F128/140, Mirk in the later edition.) It is worth mentioning since Kinloch lamented that he 'had little or no material intelligence with regard the Nepaul Country from him'.²⁶ This should have set alarm bells ringing – the EIC's traditional channels of information had failed. Kinloch had not planned upon meeting any Capuchins,

²¹ Ibid., p.19.

²² Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825* (London: John Murray, 1828), p.211.

²³ Sinha, 'Contract, Work, and Resistance', p.22.

²⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 26th August 1767, Book 1, Folio 1b.

²⁵ Ibid., 1st September 1767, Book 1, Folio 4b.

²⁶ Ibid., 3rd September 1767, Book 1, Folio 5b.

and the expedition did not hinge upon their intelligence. However, it is unusual that he would meet one so far from their mission at Bettiah, on the road from Kathmandu where they had recently been resident. It raises the possibility that this individual had come from Nepal, that he did have intelligence of the Gorkhali defences being raised, but chose not to impart it. Had Kinloch known about the scale of defences being erected higher up in the foothills, he would have hurried, or requested reinforcements. Intelligence from this missionary would have proven crucial, but it was not provided.

IV:2 Feeding the Expedition: The Supply and Withholding of Grain

Kinloch expected to encounter difficulty in food supply as the expedition approached the foothills, having been forewarned by his guide Ram Das: ‘from Sidely [Sindhuli] to Napaul there were some villages, but my finding grain in them depended entirely on the people remaining when I arrived which was hardly to be expected.’²⁷ The same guide therefore advised Kinloch to contract a local supplier, someone whom he could depend upon. Kinloch then ‘applied to Mr Rumbold telling him how much service depended upon this & he recommended Dondao Chudhary, who he had reason to believe by the Character Sita Broy gave of him to think proper person for such an undertaking’.²⁸ This was Shitab Rai, the Raja of Patna and vassal to the Company, providing a character reference for a local grain merchant. That individual’s second name appears a corruption of *Chaudhuri*, a leading merchant in every trade who received fees, represented grievances to the government, regulated the price of commodities, settled minor disputes and most importantly in this context, met extraordinary demand when persons of rank or troops passed.²⁹ Kinloch duly approached him before the expedition set out.

With rice harvests dependent on the monsoon, and greater armies roaming Bengal year by year, there was undoubtedly friction over food supply in the mid-eighteenth century.³⁰ In times of scarcity, there were often hoarded grain supplies to be had, yet the population’s access to that supply depended on its price, which teetered around the upper limit of affordability for many. For that reason, an overwhelming number of people in rural society, an estimated fifty percent, depended substantially on the market for their

²⁷ Ibid., 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 7a.

²⁸ Ibid., 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 8a.

²⁹ KumKum Banerjee, ‘Grain Traders and the East India Company: Patna and its Hinterland in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 23:4 (1986), p.417.

³⁰ For the difference between shortage and famine, see Urmita Ray, ‘Subsistence Crises in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Bihar’, *Social Scientist*, 41:3/4 (March-April 2013) pp.3-8.

subsistence requirements. Realising there was profit to be made, merchants raised the price in times of shortage to the point where wealthy elites could afford their food supply, but others could not. British sepoy armies greatly exacerbated this problem, since the Company bought food at the 'Bengal Average' price. In some areas this was greater than the regional, local price.³¹ Grain could be cheaper or more expensive, depending on the absence or presence respectively of a source of fixed demand such as an army.³² A merchant therefore stood to gain by selling to the EIC instead of the local population, or by matching the 'Bengal Average,' guaranteeing a sale despite their rates standing well above the local, subaltern villager's buying power. This problem worsened as Company armies grew whilst taxation and the price of foodstuffs increased after 1757.

These difficulties reached breaking point within a few years of 1767 – manipulation of the market and hoarding were greatly to blame for the Bengal Famine. Local grain merchants were sensitive to Company manoeuvres, and could practice what Rajat Datta called 'covert resistance' in which they bought up grain reserves, in order to monopolize prices and supply, if they thought the EIC were about to do just that – perhaps if they were about to campaign (as was the case that summer in Patna, since it was no secret that Kinloch would soon depart.)³³

This friction and Kinloch's course of action opens up a further opportunity to discuss marginalized agency and influence – that of Dondao Chaudhuri, the contracted grain merchant. Whilst crossing the flood plains, Kinloch sent for this man. He had 'given every direction I could think necessary three months before', and had 'offer'd to advance him a sum of money that nothing to material a matter might be wanting'.³⁴ This was normal: in many cases money was advanced to local agents against the supply of finished goods in the future.³⁵ Interestingly though, the merchant refused the offer, instead assuring Kinloch he 'cou'd, in the space of a week, get everything ready if he had that warning'. Having given the merchant three weeks Kinloch now required food. He sent for Dondao Chaudhuri, only to find he had 'not 600 m'd of grain in the buzzar'.³⁶ Kinloch first used threats: 'I told him he was now a follower of the Camp and might depend on it if he did not perform his promise I would not hesitate in making an example of him.'³⁷ He then

³¹ These percentages and statements taken from Datta, 'The Agrarian Economy', pp.409-416.

³² Banerjee, 'Grain Traders', p.416.

³³ Datta, 'The Agrarian Economy', p.432.

³⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 8a.

³⁵ Stiller, 'The Role of Fear', p.54.

³⁶ Kinloch's *m'd* abbreviation refers to the *Maund*, a variable weight, 76 pounds in Bengal, 37 ½ in Surat. It is assumed that having served in Madras then Patna, Kinloch was applying the Bengali quantity. These figures found in *Glossary*, in Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*.

³⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 8a.

suggested he would take EIC business elsewhere, 'if he therefore thought he cou'd not discharge the office he had undertaken to tell me once and I would endeavour to get Mr. Liethieullier, salt-agent at Durbenga[Darbhanga], to undertake the contract.' Finally, he promised a further advance. In response to this, the merchant assured Kinloch that 'in the space of three days he would have 3000 m'd of grain ready'. He refused the money, and asked 'why shou'd I [Kinloch] be so uneasy about him. He had always supplied General Carnac and Sir Robert Barker and never found them displeased'.³⁸

So began a game of cat and mouse in which the merchant did not supply, Kinloch delivered incentives and threats, the merchant renewed his promise, but once more did not supply. After that initial conversation the merchant avoided Kinloch, instead sending messengers. This pattern repeated itself throughout the course of the expedition. First, having had five days to supply instead of the agreed three days, he left a message to say 'that he was gone on before to Jannickpore where he would meet me with a sufficient supply'.³⁹ Upon arrival there, Kinloch wrote that there was 'as yet no account of the Choudrey, or his grain'.⁴⁰ He left a representative at Janakpur, Mr Kyd, with instructions to send on any grain supplied. Upon his arrival at Sindhuli days later he was met with a letter, informing him that Kyd 'had sent 50 bullocks loaded with grain that he had collected there. The Choudrey since I left him having not furnished an ounce, nor had he heard from him, or seen him'.⁴¹ It was not until he was encamped at Hariharpur on the 11th of October that the merchant's supply bullocks finally arrived. Kinloch wrote in despair:

The villainy of the Chowdrey did not appear plainer in any instance than this. I had ask'd him at Durbhanga how many m'd it was common for a bullock to carry. He answered in Bengal four, but in the country I was going to three he was certain would be enough. I then told him to take care that he never sent less than three. For so many bullock load being common expression, I might always know the quantity. I had to depend on instead of two hundred and ten m'ds which this quantity ought to have been, it turne'd out to be less than thirty, and not a grain of salt.⁴²

This instance is indicative of previously marginalized resistance. The grain merchant's promise without delivery sabotaged Kinloch's expedition. The merchant may have genuinely believed he could provide the resources asked for, though this seems unlikely since he refused the advance payment. He may have had his doubts, but frantically tried to

³⁸ Ibid., 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 8b.

³⁹ Ibid., 10th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 11a.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 17b.

⁴¹ Ibid., 24th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 3a.

⁴² Ibid., 11th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 27a.

procure the grain, induced by the Company's promised payment rates. The provision of grain could be hindered by various natural conditions. Grain could not be kept in store for very long, being prone to damage by insects or damp. The market was usually a short one, with sales concluding mid-August. It only took a little extra rainfall to inundate the fields at the wrong time to mar the crops.⁴³ 1767 was such a year of heavy rainfall, and since Kinloch first contracted the merchant much earlier than September, that which was stored could have deteriorated or been sold elsewhere.

The merchant was perhaps thwarted by someone else further on in the chain, marginalized farmers who could have acted upon deep-rooted bitterness at the merchant's profit margins. This was a very complicated network of trading activity with rich and poor traders, and various intermediaries. As Urmita Ray described, the grain trade in rural Bihar involved 'thousands of small transactions'.⁴⁴ Nor does this difficulty need to be contained within the Darbhanga district. Due to the uneven spatial characteristic of the monsoon, crop failure rarely occurred simultaneously all over the province and food could be procured elsewhere in the province during shortages. Merchants often bought grain from a region with greater surplus, then sold it at a higher price in the region affected by crop failure. Yet those producers with the surplus did not benefit, being contracted by the merchant to sell at a fixed rate, before its greater value became apparent.⁴⁵ It is plausible that the merchant thus faced dissent, or a lack of co-operation, elsewhere behind the scenes.

Banerjee decries the general impression of local Bihari grain trade as a 'shadowy sphere peopled by a medley of intermediaries, the functional differences of whom are not always recognized and whose activities seem to converge in a confused tangle of "petty" dealings'. They argued that 'the networks of local trade formed little microcosms in themselves, each with its own tiny substructure, which became a component in the general structure of Indian trade as a whole'.⁴⁶ There were therefore many individuals beyond Dondao Chaudhuri who were in a position to undermine the 1767 expedition.

The first link beyond the farmers were storers, the *grihastha-beparis*, dominant peasants who could branch out. They purchased the produce of their neighbours at harvest or by means of advances. They then moved into the market. They generally made about twenty percent profit on a harvest, twice a year, but could not expand too far if they could not move their grain from the village to the market, that was done by the second link, the

⁴³ Banerjee, 'Grain Traders', pp.411-412.

⁴⁴ Ray, 'Subsistence Crises', p.5.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.6.

⁴⁶ Banerjee, 'Grain Traders', p.405.

Baladiya beparis, who had bullocks for hire. (This was not a problem in 1767, they had plenty of bullocks.) They were often poorer, but could be wealthy in some instances. *Paikars* were similar, but wealthier and higher caste.⁴⁷ These two parties were primarily contracted by *Mahajans* – large, wholesale merchants. They usually secured grain through advances of payments to the link men of the trade (*Baladiyas* and *Paikars*.) Then there were *Bhasaniya Mahajans*: Gosain and Sannyasi merchants as well as *Beruni* merchants who more often transported grain by boat.⁴⁸

Banerjee wrote that ‘Chaudhuris also possessed a degree of control and supervision over markets as a whole... and often their offices even in the late eighteenth century were derived from the express permission and sanction of government’.⁴⁹ Dondao Chaudhuri was empowered by Shitab Rai and was perhaps more closely associated with that local power than the *ryots*, farmers and smaller traders. Marginalized agency would have declined to provide in spite of these Chaudhuri’s connections to the raja. Then again, it may be precisely the Chaudhuri’s service in 1767 to the EIC soldiers, rather than the Raja of Patna, that deterred those lower down the chain from providing grain – Rai had previously appeared sympathetic towards the wider population during times of scarcity, drawing upon famine policies. The EIC as the new revenue collectors on the other hand did no such thing.⁵⁰ After 1770 the EIC sought to encourage the movement of grain from one locality to another, though this often simply passed on the deficit, causing resentment and starvation. An attempt to counter this by regulating and limiting grain flows at times exacerbated the problem, often throwing urban centres like Patna into trouble.⁵¹

The merchant himself could have been lying, he may have resented Company adherence to the ‘Bengal Average,’ since we know he had held previous contracts with both Colonel Barker and Shitab Rai, so was in a position to compare. Om Prakash has argued that after 1765, the EIC wielded further political leverage with which to coerce intermediary merchants, ending the ‘level playing field’ that they had previously enjoyed.⁵²

Either way, 1767 was not a year of scarcity – grain reserves existed. As with the supply of boats, though we cannot say for certain whether it was the grain merchant, *someone* in the supply chain, *somewhere* in this previously marginalized local space, refused to provide grain destined for Company troops, despite Kinloch being given the impression

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.409-411.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.417.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.420.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.422.

⁵² Om Prakash, ‘The English East India Company and India’, in Bowen, Lincoln, Rigby, eds, *The Worlds of the East India Company*, p.8.

otherwise. In the long term, this led to famine amongst Kinloch's expedition. In the shorter term, returning to the plains, it meant Kinloch had to rely on the support of the local villagers that he knew he could not guarantee, having initially contracted Dondao Chaudhuri for that reason.

IV:3 'What Was I Now To Do?': Rural Communities and EIC Military Occupation

Whilst struggling over floodwaters and wrangling over food supply, Kinloch also made plans to negotiate with local villagers – for food, support, and direction. Likewise, these settlements would have heard of the approaching soldiers. As the expedition made progress away from Patna, they entered the traditional territory of the Raj Darbhanga, the Khandavalas. This family were Brahmins, claiming heritage from the old kings of Mithila. By 1767 the ruler was Raja Pratap Singh, having only recently shifted his capital to Darbhanga from Bhawara in 1762. The Khandavalas held a mixed reputation for high taxation alongside the promotion of local Mithili language and culture. Their relationship with the EIC deteriorated after Buxar – though Raja Pratap Singh held a court, privy council and hereditary succession, the British regarded him a zamindar only, not the head of a princely state.⁵³ By Kinloch's arrival this fallout had come to a head:

The whole of this country from Darbunga is called the Tiroot [Tirhut] province, which is divided by the Cumwa Nulla, and formerly governed by Rajah Purtop Sing, but he failing in the payment of his revenues a force was sent to take him to which he delivered himself up in the year 1766, since which time a fousdar has had the nominal authority of the Rajah and Purtop has been kept prisoner at Patna.⁵⁴

Such a move on behalf of the Company may not have endeared them to the local elite – the landowners, headmen, even prominent merchants, who had flourished under Raja Pratap Singh's leadership in the aftermath of his move to Darbhanga. That Kinloch would assume the loyalty of these people in a country wherein Company forces had marched, seized the raja and thrown him in a debtor's prison seems short-sighted.

The wider population may also have had complicated feelings regarding the nominal authority that the EIC had established. The era after Plassey saw merchants and EIC agents alike enter rural trades previously regulated by the Bengal nawabs. Their profits were often made unfairly through violence and intimidation at the expense of the local,

⁵³ For a summary of the Khandavalas, see Jata Shankar Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 48 (1962), 14-104.

⁵⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 13th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 13a.

forming the lament of Mir Kasim that ‘every village and district in that province was ruined by their hands’.⁵⁵ Previously areas could serve to profit by engaging with foreign trade on their own terms. Now it had come to their doorstep and those terms were dictated. For many villagers the deliverer of ruin was not British, but local elites who mediated.⁵⁶ Yet there was good reason to be angry with the EIC – in recent years under company influence Darbhanga had struggled: Kinloch considered it ‘a large, straggling, ruinous place,’ noting that ‘there is a phousdar for collection revenues, but seems to have little else but the name. Business being chiefly managed by a dewan, appointed by the government’.⁵⁷ The local taxpayers may also have held conflicting opinions on the imprisonment of their traditional ruler. Raja Pratap Singh could have collected taxes from them, and then refused to share that revenue with the EIC as *divan* of Bengal, which would have endeared him to neither the Company nor the marginalized taxpayer. Alternatively, Singh could have insufficiently collected taxes in the first place. If that were the case, following his imprisonment in 1766, the expedition would have arrived shortly after the villagers had their taxation collected by Company officials, at a higher rate than previously under the Khandavalas.

On the other hand, the proximity of the Gorkhali threat gave the region an impetus to support the Company. It firstly damaged existing Himalayan trade networks, for instance Kinloch found a salt agent residing at Darbhanga who ‘complain’d much of the decay of the trade’. Merchants here faced financial difficulty: being able neither to ship their heavier cargos over the floodwaters, nor find a market for lowland goods in the warring hills. Instead, they were obliged to hoard resources, Kinloch observing such supplies of ‘pine from the mountains... likewise cutch, tinkaal, copper and iron’ for which ‘passage was obstructed’.⁵⁸ This problem principally applied to those involved in the Himalayan trade, many of whom supported the EIC as a buyer or supplier. There were also signs though that Gorkhali raids had severely damaged the region’s agrarian economy. Kinloch observed that ‘the country still continues uncultivated which cannot be easily accounted for, (as by the appearance it seems to be extremely fertile and very pleasant) unless it be owing to the fear of the mountaineers to whose excursions it is quite open’.⁵⁹

Kinloch certainly argued Shah had established a punitive, oppressive presence in the region, believing him to have built a local fort from which to extract money from the locals: ‘Passed the kella [Killa in alternative text] of Kurgunge [Keergunge] uninhabited, it is

⁵⁵ Subramanian, *History of India*, p.135.

⁵⁶ Marshall, ‘Introduction’, in Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.34.

⁵⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 7th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 9b.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 9b.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 13th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 13a

the small mud fort consisting of a square of 40 yards, with towers and angles, it was made by the Goorka Rajah 4 years ago, in which he kept a Fousdar for raising contributions.⁶⁰ However the lack of cultivation in Darbhanga and Janakpur may not have resulted from Gorkhali incursions - the regional decay had occurred recently and was an ongoing observation of Kinloch's, whilst the fort had been abandoned for some time by the Gorkhalis and left to ruin, rendering the timeline obscure and the correlation between Gorkhali incursions and observable economic decay an uncertain one. Some may even have benefitted during that time wherein Shah did have a presence in the region, perhaps if the Gorkhali agent's 'contributions' raised were less than those extracted by Raja Pratap Singh, or more recently the British.

There was certainly discrepancy between the different taxation levels and evidence that local populations preferred to direct their tax towards the least extortionate: since taxation rates were reviewed annually, some tenants took the opportunity to abandon tracts within EIC territory and focus instead on those further into the Tarai.⁶¹ The decay noted at Darbhanga could therefore demonstrate a realignment of priorities amongst Mithili tenants, towards their land that fell under Gorkhali taxation and authority. There are examples from within Bengal during the late eighteenth century of cultivators using their ability to relocate, or threatening the use of it, in order to achieve their aims. One ryot petition for instance stated 'thou are head of one country, we have a thousand countries to go to, you are chief, we are ryotts, you will therefore order us justice'.⁶² Jon Wilson, who studied the circumstances around that petition, wrote that 'agrarian relations were governed by a process in which peasants bargained to find the most secure and profitable site for cultivation'.⁶³ If they did not find that site, they relocated. Therefore, if the Darbhanga region had been devastated, the *ryots* there during Shah's raids may have long since left. Those incumbent in 1767 would not have grievances against the Gorkhali on those grounds.

Political loyalties and land cultivation were therefore fluid in these borderlands. The relationship between local political power and local subaltern becomes hazy. The traditional rulers were now at odds with the Company, yet there were also Gorkhali incursions and the suggestion that the *Kurgunge Kella* was occupied by Shah for some time. Whilst merchants

⁶⁰ Ibid., 14th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 13b.

⁶¹ This was a tactic observed elsewhere in India by Eugene Irschick: 'To evade taxes, the landowners resorted to various tactics, like providing false information and abandoning their fields'. Irschick, Eugene F. *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India 1795-1895* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), summarized in Wickremesekera, 'The Best Black Troops', p.23.

⁶² Petition of Ryots of Cargeehat, Futtypore & ca., in Jon E. Wilson, 'A Thousand Countries to go to': Peasants and Rulers in Late Eighteenth-Century Bengal', *Past & Present*, 189 (November 2005) p.85.

⁶³ Wilson, 'A Thousand Countries', p.81.

already engaged with the Company lamented this situation, the response of groups without vested interest in EIC trade is unclear. These fissures meant the support that the expedition needed was by no means guaranteed. Apprehensions towards the British, Khandavalas and Gorkhalis help explain the course of events upon the expedition's approach to Janakpur. Having sent ahead a message through concern over the grain merchant's ongoing deviance, Kinloch 'had an answer from the Jannickpore people that they would wait my coming or continue a little way from their villages and join me on the road and furnish me what I wanted'.⁶⁴ However, upon his arrival, he 'found the whole village abandon'd'. Whilst the expedition halted in the empty settlement, a *fakir* came in, and informed Kinloch that 'Bulram Dass [Balaram Das] the head man, and the people were at the distance of 2 Coss and wou'd come in next day, upon which I dispatched him with a letter full of fair promises and sent guards to protect their houses'.⁶⁵ The local population had assured Kinloch they would meet him but then fled into the neighbouring countryside, leaving the expedition to find the village deserted.

The villagers could have been afraid. The EIC in this instance was not embodied by a tax collector but a large sepoy army, and their coming threatened plunder and violence. In the past, land and property had indeed been seized by the use of military force.⁶⁶ Kinloch's order for guards to protect the houses demonstrates his concern over the likelihood of theft. The villagers may also have avoided Kinloch in order to avoid the expedition's demands. Previously, expeditions had taken care not to establish cantonments within or too close to the towns and villages, for fear of a strain on provisions and relations.⁶⁷ Kinloch had not done this, and would later seize buildings in Sindhuli for shelter. It is furthermore evident from the journal that he intended to ask the villagers for provisions.

Kinloch's own assessment of the situation was that the villagers were torn between the previously outlined competing loyalties, writing 'intelligence by the Hirarcas this Day that most of the villages between us and the mountains were deserted, particularly Jannickpore at which I had been inform'd we shou'd find plenty of Grain the reason given for this was that the People were much at a loss whether to join us or the enemy'.⁶⁸ The villagers fled in order to buy time, collectively stalling their encounter with the expedition whilst they decided upon a course of action. Villages often followed the loose leadership of a headman, but were at liberty to break from that, and perhaps the time they had bought

⁶⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 10th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 11a.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 14th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 14a.

⁶⁶ Bernard Cohn, 'The Initial British Impact on India: A Case Study of the Banaras Region', in Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.241.

⁶⁷ Colonel Lawrence, *Narrative of the War on the Coast of Coromandel*, in Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*, p.72.

⁶⁸ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 6th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 6b.

was spent discussing how best to approach the expedition's presence. Eventually the villagers of Janakpur made a choice. On 15th September, Kinloch wrote that he had 'got several of the head village people to come in. Promis'd them protection and gave them beetle [betel] and they on their part promis'd to supply me with what they could afford, but that the poverty of their country hindered them from giving much, as they were often rifled by their restless neighbours the mountaineers. They seemed timorous harmless people mostly facquiers'.⁶⁹ They gave Kinloch plenty of encouragement to move on, emphasising the Gorkhali menace and presenting themselves as unthreatening, yet they offered the expedition very little help. It was a course of action that removed the army from its doorstep and potentially countered Gorkhali raids with minimal cost, obligation and contact on their part.

Faced with dwindling food supplies and valuable time lost, Kinloch split his forces at Janakpur. It is at this point that the agency of a critical component of the expedition becomes relevant – that of the people in the baggage train. In particular, the role of the expedition's porters becomes important, since they may have expected to be relieved of their duties at this stage, only to find that the Nepalese porters had not met them at Darbhanga. The presence of families, holy men and bazaar merchants would have had a positive effect on morale, yet they also brought difficulties and troubles. For these reasons Kinloch certainly endeavoured to keep them under military discipline. This was made clear to the grain merchant earlier on in the expedition and reiterated to the camp followers at Janakpur, where Kinloch 'gave out the strictest orders against the Sepoy's servants or women following them, [into the Tarai] that any who did wou'd be made severe examples of, and promised permission for their coming on as soon as the fort of Sidely [Sindhuli] shou'd be reduced'.⁷⁰ Kinloch knew the sepoys would not want to be separated, yet he also felt compelled to threaten with discipline since military control over camp followers could be tenuous. They certainly had the opportunity to act independently, having already separated from the expedition in taking different routes across the flood waters.⁷¹ Whilst many would have little choice but to follow their employers or family members in the ranks, others would have had the option to return if the journey seemed troubled – the bazaar keepers in particular could have evaluated the risk versus potential profit.

Nor did this civilian column simply follow in the footsteps of the military one. Instead, the military components were hindered, and had to make accommodations for the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 17a.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 16th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 17b.

⁷¹ Ibid., 3rd September 1767, Book 1, Folio 5b.

civilian ones. Kinloch was obliged to split his forces send companies of builders ahead to repair the roads so that they could support the baggage livestock and carts. The presence of the baggage train also had the simple yet crucial effect of slowing the expedition down. On multiple occasions the mended roads were often then worsened by rainfall, causing delay.⁷² Kinloch often found the need to pause whilst others caught up or rested. Such were their troubles between Darbhanga and Janakpur, with ‘many of the people knock’d up, with sour legs, cuts and pains from the badness of the road,’ that Kinloch was forced to halt altogether one day, ‘the artillery and buzzar bullocks being much fatigued as well as the people made me apprehensive we could not reach Jannickpore the next day, so determin’d to make an easy march’.⁷³

By the time the expedition arrived at Janakpur it was clear that the civilian elements were slowing the march and consuming too much of the food supplies. The benefits on sepoy morale and comfort were not worth these troubles. They could themselves become unruly, given that Kinloch had at times prohibited them from accessing the grain supplies. He resolved to ‘set the bildars to work in order to repair the fort for a place to leave the baggage and followers in, as they would greatly add to the quantity of provision’.⁷⁴ He left them behind, splitting his military forces furthermore, leaving two companies of soldiers behind under Mr Kyd. This was partly for the defence of the baggage train, and also a protective measure on behalf of the Janakpur residents, so Kinloch could ‘protect the villages from the oppression of our followers’.⁷⁵ Days had already been lost, food had been consumed. Perhaps most critically, Kinloch split from his artillery – the cannon and horse had proven cumbersome over the floodwaters and sodden roads, and were slowing the sepoys’ progress. Kinloch ordered that they continue at their own pace, whilst the expedition pressed on. The significance of this separation would only transpire once Kinloch observed the scale of Gorkhali defences. Not only was the artillery crucial as a display of force and intimidation in South Asian warfare, it could more specifically have dislodged the mountain pass redoubts that the expedition was soon to encounter.⁷⁶

At this stage Kinloch wrote in his journal: ‘In such a situation what was I now to do? I saw a prodigious chain of mountains before me, the highest of which I was told I had to go over, to wait here for grain was giving the enemy an opportunity (if not done already)

⁷² Ibid., 8th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 10b.

⁷³ Ibid., 12th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 12b.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 15th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 17a.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 16th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 18a.

⁷⁶ The significance of cannon as a display of wealth, intimidation and force was observed by Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.45.

to throw up works on mountains which seem'd by their height and nature to be the strongest of barriers'.⁷⁷ He turned to his guide Ram Das for advice, asking how it was possible to proceed without a sufficient quantity of grain. The guide told Kinloch of 'the many bad consequences' of any delay, and assured him 'that there was the greatest possibility of my [Kinloch] finding a large quantity of grain at Sidely [Sindhuli] where there were many people and many villages'.⁷⁸ On this advice, Kinloch departed Janakpur into the jungles of the Tarai. He had left behind him a severe warning for the grain merchant, the bazaar, families and servants of his sepoy and a sizeable detachment of soldiers and artillery. He had secured neither logistical support to cross the country nor a sufficient food supply, owing on no small account to the decisions made by marginalized agents, and was acting upon intelligence provided by individuals who privately wished the expedition to proceed no matter what the challenge. The expedition had not made a good start.

IV:4 Into the Hills: Encountering New Landscapes and Localities

Upon leaving Janakpur on the 17th September, the expedition first made its way through the Tarai - a thick band of malarial jungle stretching far along the feet of the Himalayas - then trudged into steep valleys and peaks wooded with thick bamboo, oak and rhododendron forests. It was within this landscape that they floundered, a combination of natural forces and the actions of previously neglected historical agents.

Kinloch's march began through what he described as 'a wild uninhabited jungle, and no trace to be seen of any living creature, except wild elephants, tiger and bears which are here in vast numbers'.⁷⁹ It was here on the 18th of September that disaster struck. The expedition 'enter'd the dry bed of a river, in which our road continued for near 2 Coss, and was oblig'd to halt in it there being no encamping in the jungle'. Kinloch observed that this was unsafe, noting 'these beds of rivers are fill'd occasionally by falls from the neighbouring mountains; I was in some apprehension (as it had been very cloudy all day) of its coming down in the night, which must be with great velocity, there being trees torn up by the roots lying in the bed of it at least 100 feet from top to root'. Kinloch's unease worsened through the night, as 'it thunder'd and lighten'd with great violence and look'd black all round'. He turned to his guide Ram Das, fearing that the waters could spoil the supplies and ammunition magazine. He 'sent for the Facquier and desired his opinion,

⁷⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 16th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 18b.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 16th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 18b.

⁷⁹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 20a.

whether we shou'd not endeavour to cut down as much of the jungle as wou'd hold the buzzar, magazine and arms. He assur'd me there was no danger'.⁸⁰ As the storm worsened, Kinloch wrote that he 'desired one of the servants to look if it had the appearance of fair weather who returned crying. Carry away all the things or all will be lost. He was follow'd by a body of water which burst open that part of the tent wall'.⁸¹

His journal continues; 'I assembl'd the lascars and two artillery men, beseeched them to carry it off. They answer'd there was no carrying it to the other side and to remove to any other part of the bed of the river was the same for if the water continued to rise as it had done, there cou'd be no safety for it. I told them I was sure they cou'd carry it over and offer'd to show them the way'.⁸² Thus began a humiliating exhibition by Kinloch. In attempting to cross the flash flooding the current swept his feet out from underneath him. It carried him down for twenty-five yards, and 'luckily brought me against the bank where I had hardly strength enough left to lay hold of the grass, I scrambled a little way into the jungle and found the people who got over climbing up trees'. The lightning presented Kinloch with a bleak vista: 'the wreck of the camp, tents torn down, men & baggage rolling down with the stream and I doubted not it was out of my power to save the ammunition and grain. I thought the expedition wou'd end here and until daylight arriv'd I felt the utmost tortures'.⁸³ When morning came, he assessed the damage. Fifteen stands of guns were washed away, almost all the ammunition ruined, and a day's worth of grain lost.

The first point of note from this forlorn picture is that the challenging Himalayan landscape, its unpredictability and formidable nature, should not be neglected as a key force in determining the events of 1767. Kinloch and the EIC considered this natural historical agent a static, unchanging entity. They did not prepare for the unpredictable. It seems strange, given how much Kinloch had endured at the hands of floodwaters in the plains, and having seen the storm break around him, that he did not follow his instinct and prepare the camp for a potential flash flood. Within this personal encounter with the Himalayan landscape, Kinloch underestimated its threat. The second point is that, upon once more consulting Ram Das and being assured that there was 'the greatest probability of plenty at Sidely [Sindhuli]' and that 'no impediment remained to hinder the Choudrey's grain from coming on', the expedition continued, despite Kinloch's own admission that this was a monumental calamity.⁸⁴ The flash flood waters subsided and Kinloch continued

⁸⁰ Ibid., 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 21a.

⁸¹ Ibid., 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 21b.

⁸² Ibid., 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 22a.

⁸³ Ibid., 19th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 22b.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 19th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 23b.

on. Once more he split his forces; sending an advance guard on to attack Sindhuli in the hope that he could secure provisions faster.

Kinloch's difficulties in the Tarai and foothills would have been alleviated if he had support from the local people. This was something Kinloch was assured of in a letter received en route from Jaya Prakash Malla, who told him that 'wou'd I make the greatest haste to Sidely, which as soon as I reduc'd many of their people wou'd join me'.⁸⁵ Such assurances were premature, given the competing loyalties in this borderlands space. This was formerly the Kingdom of Makwanpur, recently defeated and annexed by Gorkha. That rendered the Tarai and lower foothills 'a place of jolting interests between the Gorkhali authorities of Nepal and Awadh or what later became British India'.⁸⁶ For the ruling Sen elites of Makwanpur the cities of Nepal Valley offered a refuge after Shah's annexation, and this could have ensured a degree of loyalty to Kinloch on behalf of their subjects.⁸⁷ They were however likewise besieged by the Gorkhalis in those cities, and were not in a position to offer Kinloch their support. Some of these elites did not traditionally fall in step with Jaya Prakash Malla and many landowners would proclaim themselves subject to different rulers at different times, depending on which one recognized their land rights and grants.⁸⁸ For that reason, The Sens of Makwanpur's fall and subsequent asylum in Kathmandu presented an opportunity to dissatisfied local elites. Likewise, Shah was sensitive to this, and courted their support in return for land.

By all means the Tarai and lower foothills were sparsely populated, yet in spite of Kinloch's assessment, this was a managed wilderness – the jungles were harvested by neighbouring villagers for timber, honey, and other resources. Villages in the lower foothills and Tarai had reason to resent the Gorkhalis: these settlements were composed of many families, each providing different basic resources, yet there were certain provisions that had to be brought in, and the villagers were far from autonomous.⁸⁹ They were therefore reliant upon wider trade networks that the Gorkhalis had blockaded. After the conquest of Nepal Valley these networks re-opened, yet the Tarai developed a new significance, becoming 'the most prized acquisition of the Gorkhali rulers, partly because of its existing land revenues, royalty from timber exports, levies on pastures, and the export of elephants'.⁹⁰ The resources and wealth of those living there would thus be vulnerable to

⁸⁵ Ibid., 18th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 20a.

⁸⁶ Dhungel, 'Understanding Nepali History', p.172.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Whelpton, *A History of Nepal*, p.25.

⁸⁹ Wolpert, *India*, p.133.

⁹⁰ Durga P. Ojha, 'History of Land Settlement in Nepal Tarai', *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 11:1 (December 1983), p.23.

extraction by the Gorkhalis. Many were forced to migrate to India.⁹¹ In addition, the jungles expanded, increasingly considered a formidable defensive barrier, with Gorkhali attempts to control and reduce local cultivation of the forest. Historians have found hostility and resistance towards Gorkhali legislation and taxation in this era: those living in the Tarai abandoned tracts and relocated, escaping any new encroachment or levy, leaving the land to return to jungle.⁹²

Nor would the local population have liked that the EIC had brought soldiers to their doors, commandeering the houses of Sindhuli village – Kinloch spent the evening on the 23rd September in such lodgings, amongst those wounded in the first assault upon the neighbouring fort.⁹³ Any local concerns about where the soldiers would be quartered and how they would be fed were therefore justified.

Shah has previously been credited with making direct contact with the elites within this region. Ludwig Stiller once argued that, supposedly learning from his victory over the Mughals in 1763, Shah believed his ability to defend against invasion ‘increased in direct proportion to his ability to keep the British ignorant of the easier routes through the hills. From the very first stages of his unification effort he adopted the policy of closing off trails into the hills and settling trusted families in key points along those that were open’.⁹⁴ The landowners at Sindhuli could consequently have been supported by Gorkha, that village and fort being such a key point. Evidence suggests the local elite did support Shah. According to Mohan Prasad Khanal, ‘a certain Ramchandra Parsai, a landowner of some repute from Mugitar near Sindhuli, provided strategic support and logistics to the Gorkhalis.’⁹⁵ Kinloch originally planned to travel through Mugitar but was forced a different direction by Gorkhali fortifications. Ramchandra Parsai’s assistance therefore prevented EIC occupation and provisioning from his land. Kinloch himself reported that another ruler in the foothills, Chumpan Singh Thapa, had sent word to Shah, alerting him of the EIC expedition. Kinloch believed Shah upon receiving this ‘wou’d certainly send a body of his best Seapoys to dispute the place with me’.⁹⁶

The above two examples were both prominent landowners, (presumably literate if they were able to transcribe messages to Shah.) For the local subaltern population there is comparatively scant information available to suggest they either supported or opposed the British or Gorkhali. However, the journal does provide detail on one particular encounter

⁹¹ Ibid., p.22.

⁹² Nutandhar Sharma, review of *The Kings of Nepal & The Tharu of the Tarai*, Gisele Krauskopf & Pamela Meyer, eds, *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 24 (2003), p.127.

⁹³ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 23rd September 1767, Book 2, Folio 1b.

⁹⁴ Stiller, ‘The Role of Fear’, p.65.

⁹⁵ Mohan Prasad Khanal, quoted in Raj, *Expedition*, p.28.

⁹⁶ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 17th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 19b.

at this point that illuminates the competing loyalties individuals faced and the importance of the decisions they made. An advanced party under Lieutenant Hogan caught a *mahajan*, a merchant en route to Nepal Valley, and his servant. Kinloch attempted to capitalize on this local intelligence by sending on the servant and two *barkaras* with a message for Jaya Prakash Malla requesting reinforcements. He 'disguis'd the Harcarahs like two facquiers, put the letter in a small bamboo which one of them us'd as a walking stick, and the plan of their operations being settl'd when they came into the country, away they went'. Later that evening they returned, with the servant claiming they were too sick to continue, a claim Kinloch treated with suspicion.⁹⁷ The servant did not wish to perform this service – he had been mistreated having been caught and held by Hogan's sepoy, moreover the bamboo trick was not innovative and if caught by the Gorkhalis, he would have been hanged. Rather than forcing the servant, Kinloch then 'sent the Mahajan himself first on reassuring him he should be well rewarded'. He not only acquiesced, but would continue to provide Kinloch logistical support, later offering advice on crossing a river.⁹⁸ Within this encounter we see two previously marginalized agents, the servant and the *Mahajan*, deciding whether to assist the expedition, based on an evaluation of reward offered versus Gorkhali threat posed. They both made different decisions based on what was at stake for them: whilst the *Mahajan* stood to gain from Himalayan and EIC networks, the servant's incarceration at the hands of the sepoys was more severe, the risk greater, for less benefits.

IV:5 Sindhuli Gadhi and the Role of Gorkhali Martial Strength

The agency of the Gorkhali soldiers themselves finally made a play at Sindhuli Gadhi. Kinloch had a low opinion of the soldiers opposing him. He wrote of the 'excessive high, rugged, terrible mountains, stony rough valleys, clear purling streams and jungles everywhere, inhabited by savages'. He described the Gorkhali weapon, the curved *Kukri* blade, as 'something on the form of a bill hook with which they chop off hands and cut off noses, ears and lips, a work they seem dexterous in'.⁹⁹ He considered the Gorkhalis 'extremely cowardly and timorous,' suggesting they would 'never venture to make an attack unless in such a situation that they are certain they cannot be annoy'd by you'. On explaining their service to Shah, Kinloch considered it pressed, and financially motivated: 'the Goorkha Raja having possession of all the forts on their country keeps them under as

⁹⁷ Ibid., 3rd October 1767, Book 2, Folio 17b – 18a.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 10th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 24b.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 6b.

much as possible, but I do not believe they fight for any regard or attachment to his causes, but from the hopes of a little plunder.¹⁰⁰ This was a commonly held view of South Asian soldiering, as observed by Channa Wickremesekera. Particularly resonant given that Kinloch had yet to encounter any Gorkhali soldiers was the perception that they avoided conflict: ‘the British perceived timidity and cowardice in the Indian soldier’s reluctance to close with the British enemy.’¹⁰¹ A more accurate depiction of the Gorkhali army’s composition, the Gorkhali soldier’s character, and their role within 1767 can be gleaned from a reading of Kinloch’s journal alongside Nepalese sources. That set of pre-existing values, typical of the colonialist’s ‘cruel oriental’ typecast, is challenged.

The Gorkhalis were better armed and more orderly than expected. There is evidence from Shah’s correspondence to his generals that he redirected some of his forces besieging Patan to confront the British.¹⁰² These reinforcements are noted by Kinloch’s subordinate Hardy, who informed him of ‘a body of troops clouth’d in a kind of blue uniform and arm’d with matchlocks had arrived from Napaul, which I take to be the body of chosen troops intended for the defence of Sidely’.¹⁰³ Such a unit of soldiers, regimented in their uniform and in their firearms, indicates an adaptability on behalf of the Gorkhali military: since precision-rank firing was finding success across South Asia, Shah could have developed this unit for that purpose. He may even have had assistance: as has been noted by Wickremesekera, as early as 1503 there were Milanese gunfounders in the employ of a ruler in Calicut as artillerymen, by the mid-seventeenth century the Mughal artillery was handled by a collection of European deserters, and by the late eighteenth century this had extended to infantry units.¹⁰⁴ However, this portrait of proficiency and European training was not representative of the whole Gorkhali Army, as numbers swelled and reduced throughout the Gorkha conquests – Shah’s army required a certain number to maintain the siege of the Nepal Valley cities, which Ludwig Stiller deduced was nether less than 1200 soldiers. This was greatly augmented in times of stress by conscripted recruits; peasants duly rewarded after their service.¹⁰⁵ These soldiers having been drawn from across Gorkhali territory from the rural population, potentially against their wishes and without extensive military training, did not have the conditioned martial aptitude that nationalist historians have promulgated.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 6b.

¹⁰¹ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.84.

¹⁰² Acarya quoted in Raj, *Expedition*, p.26.

¹⁰³ B.L. Add MS 16633 Journal of Captain George Kinloch.

¹⁰⁴ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.67.

¹⁰⁵ Known as the *Jhara* system. Stiller, ‘The Role of Fear’, p.58.

What the Gorkhalis did benefit from in 1767 was a significant advantage in the way they were trained, in relation to the geographical space. South Asian soldiers in the late Mughal period have been attributed an individualistic approach to combat by historians, preparing primarily for hand-to-hand fighting.¹⁰⁶ The EIC European style armies on the other hand practiced precision rank-firing. Whilst South Asian rulers including Shah had begun such training, that style was mostly advantageous in an open field. In 1767 however, the various redoubts built across serpentine roads by the Gorkhalis necessitated close combat. The thick jungle provided cover through which to retreat, and space restricted rank-firing. Importantly as previously highlighted, Kinloch had left behind his artillery.

Kinloch did not encounter a fearful, uncommitted enemy. Instead, they fought doggedly. Upon seizing Sindhuli for instance he reported that the defenders ‘behav’d like brave and resolute men, as everybody agreed they cou’d not be above eighty [in number]’.¹⁰⁷ This could be accounted for by considering their conscripted service more of an incentive to fight bravely, rather than a deterrent: they would have been recruited locally, from Sindhuli, and would thus have considered the EIC expedition invasive. Furthermore, their alternative, rural labour background could have helped them: they would not have had the appearance of soldiers, and would have made excellent spies. Shah’s letters reveal that he intended to use them that way, instructing them to ‘introduce ten to fifteen spies among the English troops’.¹⁰⁸ This explains why the Gorkhalis in 1767 were able to estimate Kinloch’s fighting strength, which they believed as the expedition marched from Sindhuli to Hariharpur was at 700, whilst Kinloch had no idea what numbers he faced.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, the dual use of the *Kukri* blade as both a weapon and a domestic tool could easily have led to the mistaking of farmers for soldiers in the eyes of the British, multiplying the threat and creating confusion.

There are further reports within Nepalese sources that suggest the Gorkhalis used innovative tactics and local knowledge. Khanal described how the Gorkhalis advanced before the British, stirring wasp and hornet nests with arrows and sticks.¹¹⁰ There are variations on the wasp narrative that undermine its creditability, with Acharya writing that the wasps attacked the British without the Gorkhalis intervening. The description could alternatively be metaphorical – implying those local to the valleys troubled Kinloch greatly as he marched, regardless of whether they were ‘stirred’ by the Gorkhalis. It was critical then for the events of 1767 that the Gorkhali recruits fought so resiliently despite being

¹⁰⁶ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.46.

¹⁰⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 23rd September 1767, Book 2, Folio 2a.

¹⁰⁸ Raj, *Expedition*, p.22.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.29.

pressed into service. What is also certain however, is that the Gorkhalis did not meet Kinloch's column in the open field at Sindhuli, and furthermore that although eventually overcoming the EIC sepoys, Kinloch was successful in seizing the fort. This contradicts the nationalist histories that have wildly exaggerated Gorkhali martial prowess in 1767, most obviously arguing that they won a pitched battle at Sindhuli that shattered Kinloch's expedition.

IV:6 Messengers and Guides: The Breakdown of Communications

Beyond Sindhuli, the expedition struggled. It is at this point that some of the marginalized agents from within the expedition's ranks can be revisited, beginning with the guides Ram Das and Muktananda. In Patna they had engineered a role for themselves, but as the journey continued their relationship with Kinloch deteriorated. On occasion, the guides provided critical, useful information. For instance, many of the sepoys would have fallen unwell were it not for Ram Das advising that they boil the river water and mix it with root, as a local antidote against its bad effects.¹¹¹ However, even in the earlier stages, the advice they provided often proved incorrect or outdated. This was due to their confidence that the expedition would succeed: a belief in the proficiency of the EIC military regardless of the information provided. By October 1767 they had seen the red-coated sepoys struggle, and realized that they had over-estimated EIC competency. Likewise, Kinloch was increasingly left frustrated by the lack of local knowledge his guides held, and considered himself deceived. He arrived at this frustration painstakingly late – for instance even after the disastrous flooding of the 18th September, wherein the expedition was ravaged despite the guides reassurances that they were not at risk, he persisted with their advice, wherein he 'sent for the Facquier again to ask him what chance I had for supply on the road'.¹¹²

These disappointments came to a head once Kinloch marched out from Sindhuli, onto the next mountain pass. Unsure how to proceed, he approached Ram Das and recorded the consultation in his journal:

He told me it was very steep and very difficult until we got to Carcoat [Khurkot], the next village we were to come to, but that the enemy had no works in any part of the way nor did he believe they wou'd give any molestation except at one pass, which from the nature they cou'd very soon render impregnable. I ask'd him

¹¹¹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 7th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 10a.

¹¹² Ibid., 19th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 23a.

whether he was certain they had no works there now, at which he answer'd he was, and a small part sent on wou'd be sufficient to process it.¹¹³

Kinloch split his forces, sending Ensign Hardy onwards. He assumed the account of Ram Das was accurate. The next morning however, 'a harcarah return'd from the officer & party, informing me that they had been repuls'd at the pass by the enemy, who had rais'd every strong works there, with great loss. I questioned the facquier, who was present, how his intelligence came to be so bad. The only answer he made was that the enemy had none there when he pass'd, that he knew the nature of the place, that it was easy to cut a road around and dispossess them.'¹¹⁴ Ram Das had not been in Nepal since the start of the year when the pass was perhaps unguarded— he did however know the terrain, which was unchanged, and he confidently asserted that the EIC sepoys would be able to cut around it.

This brought about the first confrontation between Kinloch and the guides, the former writing: 'as it was easy to see that the defence of the enemy had been a work of time I sent for the facquier and severely reprimanded him for his false intelligence, telling him 'by such blunders he wou'd effectively ruin the cause of his master, and put a stop to our troops being able to serve him'. Kinloch recorded his response as follows: 'Had you sir, march'd when you first come to Patna or soon after your arrival there, which I often trust of you to, you wou'd not have met with any such obstructions. How then sir, shou'd you blame me, when you continu'd at Patna, everybody knew you were going to Napaul and your enemy had many correspondents there; Nay the English themselves wrote the Goorkha Raja, they were coming to fight him.' Ram Das believed he provided information in good faith, and that he was let down by the lethargy with which the Company reacted and the strength of Gorkhali espionage. He furthermore lamented 'After first seeing me you never told me of the certain time you wou'd proceed, until a very short time before you did, and thus while kept in a state of ignorance'. Kinloch considered himself sabotaged, Ram Das considered himself left in the dark, blamed for the Company's delays. The two reached an impasse on the subject, Kinloch asserting that 'it was needless to reflect on what was past but to endeavour to make the best of our present situations'.¹¹⁵

This was a critical juncture: Kinloch would not punish the guide, but had to decide whether to continue with their service. Ram Das had done enough to convince him, since he one more asked for help: Kinloch 'desir'd to know if there was another road to Nepaul...he told me I cou'd go by the Harriatpore Road over Mahabid, which tho a little more difficult than this I could arrive by it at Napaul in six days'. He followed this advice,

¹¹³ Ibid., 24th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 4a.

¹¹⁴ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 4b.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 27th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 12a-13a.

and in the middle of the night formed a physical volte-face, abandoning the higher road to Nepal and instead attempted a dash westward, to Hariharpur Gadhi in present day Sindhuli district, Janakpur zone. From there they would cross the 'Mahabhul pass' then follow the Bagmati river into the valley. His guides continued to direct the expedition's route. Kinloch's reliance on them, and the problems that incurred, would continue.¹¹⁶

Local knowledge was critical on the march to Hariharpur, 'there being but one man who knew the road and he having gone on with Mr Hogan, who promis'd to return a man every night at the place he halted'.¹¹⁷ Frequently, none arrived, delayed by rains. It was within this space that fracturing relationships within the expedition played a part: between the guides and the other officers. By this stage tensions between Kinloch's staff would have been fraught: whilst Kinloch's brother Charles may have been more confidant, the junior subordinate officers were not in a position to undermine or challenge Kinloch – the commander having already demonstrated his disciplinary approach. Some officers did not have the patience for Ram Das and Muktananda that Kinloch had, and were perhaps aggrieved by the trust that they commanded from their superior. EIC officials often harboured distrust towards their South Asian guides and intermediaries, who inevitably belonged to or had experience of the very group that the EIC sought to dominate, either militarily or through commercial means. Their obliviousness to the language being spoken fostered a suspicion of the faithfulness of the translation being offered, the circles they moved in beyond the eyes of their European employers. C.A. Bayly called this the basic fear of the colonial official, writing, 'he feared their secret letters, their drumming and 'bush telepathy' and the nightly passage of seditious agents masquerading as priests and holy men'.¹¹⁸ Therefore, Kinloch's guides may have been regarded with suspicion and hostility within the camp. For example, at one point Ram Das wrote to Kinloch complaining that one of his officers 'would not listen to anything he had told him'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ The geography and exact route suggested here is rendered unclear through Kinloch's transliteration. Kinloch would initially have passed over Sindhuli then turned west at Khurkot, however he was repulsed and had to redirect. The placenames along the new route were unfamiliar to him and are rarely transcribed. From Sindhuli Gadhi, the expedition's route to Hariharpur Gadhi could either skirt along the bottom of the Mahabharat range but north of the Sivalik range via Kapilakot, or travel one of the lower east-west valleys, within the Mahabharat range itself, perhaps via Chaukitar. Either route would first follow a river as Kinloch describes, then climb up to Hariharpur, before then dropping down to follow the Bagmati Valley. Travelling within the range seems more likely considering Kinloch's description of steep valleys and difficulty crossing rivers – the route that skirted would be more open, with floodwaters rather than fast flowing rivers. The exact location of Mahabhul, where Kinloch hoped to leave the Bagmati and pass over into Nepal Valley, is unknown. It could possibly refer to the Mahabharat range itself, and the departure from that range into the Nepal Valley.

¹¹⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 29th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 14b.

¹¹⁸ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.6.

¹¹⁹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 3rd October 1767, Book 2, Folio 17b.

Kinloch occupied the former residency of the Raja of Makwanpur at Hariharpur on 2nd October.¹²⁰ Here he was surprised to find the advanced party led by Hogan, who he had sent ahead to occupy the Mahabhul pass. Kinloch 'immediately enquir'd the cause of his unexpected meeting, and he inform'd me that the Facquier had deciev'd him in all his intelligence, and had at the distance of five coss from this on his way to Mahabhul, brought him to the side of a rapid river which cou'd neither be forded or swam'.¹²¹ The next day Kinloch received a letter from Ram Das, explaining he had gone on to Nepal and that he would return in a few days. He also 'complain'd much of Lieut. Hoggan's behaviour to him'.¹²² Having fallen out with Hogan, the guide had abandoned the advanced party.

Ram Das returned on 6th of October. He would not at first see Kinloch, being 'so much tir'd and scratch'd by the jungle that he could not stir'.¹²³ Instead he was examined the next morning after some rest and composure. He assured Kinloch he had been to Kathmandu, found Jaya Prakash Malla in great spirits upon hearing of the taking of Sindhuli, and then revisited how he 'had in a manner quarrelled with Mr. Hoggan'. Kinloch drew a line under this, considering that 'the one had misunderstood the other and now there was no remedy for it'. He did however ask Ram Das why he had 'brought no letter by himself', and why 'the Rajah, agreeable to his promise, had neither wrote me at Sidely or sent any body to met me'. In response Ram Das said that he had sent via a subordinate 'a letter from the Rajah that contained every circumstance I could wish to know'. He pointed out that 'there were so many chokies of the Ghoorke's people in the way that no man cou'd pass through or less than a dozen arm'd, and that he himself had pass'd throu an unfrequented jungle'. He assured Kinloch that the Raja of Kathmandu would send his sons to meet them, that there was a pass unguarded, but that Jaya Prakash could not weaken his defences to send soldiers because no amount from the city could withstand the encircled Gorkha forces. At the time Kinloch speculated that 'all this except his not bringing a letter or anybody with him seem'd possible enough'.¹²⁴

Ram Das was incorrect. The passes were heavily defended and no support from Kathmandu would materialize. Other intelligence on the road ahead, its feasibility and the villages en route, likewise proved false. Since this guide was often given liberty to leave camp, how heavily invested was he in the expedition's fortunes? On seeing the state of affairs amongst Kinloch's ranks, would he have risked his life? The question arises whether

¹²⁰ This was not the major seat of the Sen Dynasty, Makwanpur Gadhi, which lay further west near Hetauda.

¹²¹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 2nd October 1767, Book 2, Folio 16b. This could have been the Bagmati, north-west of Hariharpur.

¹²² B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 3rd October 1767, Book 2, Folio 17a.

¹²³ Ibid., 6th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 19a.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 7th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 19a-21a.

the guide did break through the Gorkhali pickets to arrive in Kathmandu, or whether he had instead considered his options while in the forest, wondering whether he would be punished for his clash with Hogan. The latter is entirely plausible given the uncertainties and the falsities within his account.

Ram Das departed once more to observe whether the pass was open. He asked for an escort of twelve sepoys, which Kinloch acquiesced to upon condition that they were kept from going anywhere they could be attacked.¹²⁵ Four days later on the 15th October the accompanying *bavildar* and seven sepoys returned:

They gave an account that they had fallen in with a body of the enemy upon Mahabhul who occupied it with great numbers, and were at work throwing up redoubts, that the Facquier had some conversations with them, until they began to fire upon him for he having observ'd the place where they were in first had halted the sepoys where they could not be seen by the enemy. They now perceiv'd the enemy crowding on all sides upon the jungle, when he return'd and told them to make the best of their way, or they would be surrounded and cut off. They told him they could not answer to me for leaving him behind, but he desir'd them not to mind him for he wou'd care of himself. Upon which that party set out together. He with two or three sepoys ran into the thick jungle, and the harcarah with the letter took another road, that upon their returning the way they came found a large body had got round them, and now saw they had no other chance but fight their way thro' them, which they did, and return'd to us, from all which circumstance I fear the facquier and the others are all cut off.¹²⁶

This was the last Kinloch heard of Ram Das. The events recounted raise a number of questions and possibilities. Ram Das had either lied about his visit to Nepal and was thus ignorant of these defences, or he knowingly and deliberately brought the expedition into conflict. What conversation passed between him and the Gorkhalis? He may have hoped for some intelligence from them that would shed light on an alternative route, or perhaps he hoped to inform them of Kinloch's progress, and so swap sides. This would explain how the Gorkhalis knew to encircle the hidden sepoys. Either way, the encounter did not go to plan. Why then, did he reject the sepoy guard that he had insisted upon? Amongst the multitude of possible explanations, there are two opposing ones: he may well have thought separating ensured they all escaped, and could have then been captured or killed, a martyr to Kinloch's cause. Or he could have seen the opportunity to escape from Kinloch's

¹²⁵ Ibid., 11th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 26b.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 15th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 29b.

service, abandon the expedition whilst the Gorkhalis pursued the cornered EIC sepoy, cut his losses and find his own way out of the foothills.

In ascertaining which explanation is most likely, it is worth considering a letter from Shah to his commander in the region, Ramkrishna Kuvar, stating that he had intelligence that ‘one of the men of the English, who had come up from Hariharpur, was at Kathmandu with a report that since the Jats were moving against the British from the west, no action was possible’.¹²⁷ This implies that an individual from Kinloch’s entourage had indeed reached Kathmandu, then delivered an entirely different message to that which Kinloch instructed. Perhaps this was the fate of Ram Das, who in his time at Patna and en route had observed much about British circumstances and opted to relate this alternative account of the British position to Jaya Prakash Malla. This account likely ended the possibility that Malla would reduce his garrison in order to meet with Kinloch and conduct him into the valley, further decreasing the expedition’s chances of success.

Kinloch’s journal also registers poor messenger service on behalf of the *barkaras*. For instance, the expedition’s progress from the Tarai to Sindhuli was characterized by false *barkara* reports and misleading information. So on the 21st September ‘a report spread that 200 of the enemy were on a hill before us, but it prov’d without foundation’.¹²⁸ A few days later, another *barkara* scout ‘very luckily made a mistake in his intelligence by telling us the fort of Sidely was taken’ by the advanced guard Kinloch had sent on.¹²⁹ *Harkaras* also failed to deliver the merchant’s servant to Kathmandu, and failed to inform Kinloch of Hogan’s progress to Hariharpur. Given the potential for duplicity, it could be asked whether their reports of Gorkhalis ahead on the approach to Sindhuli were a product of ignorance, or an attempt to stall and confuse the British? It could be asked whether the *barkaras* accompanying the merchant’s servant returned through fear, or a mission to ensure communication did not reach Kathmandu? It could be asked whether the *barkaras* sent by Hogan to Kinloch on the approach to Hariharpur were delayed by rain, or taking the opportunity to abscond? All of these remain possibilities.

IV:7 The Sepoys: Fight or Flight?

On 4th October Kinloch wrote, ‘my situation began now to be very alarming, the provision was out, all the rivers overflow’d so that there was no stirring from where we were. The

¹²⁷ Prithvi Narayan Shah to Ramkrishna Kuvar, 1767, *Diyoopades* p.1026. in Pradhan, *Gorkha Conquests*, p.111

¹²⁸ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 21st September 1767, Book 1, Folio 26a.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 22nd September 1767, Book 1, Folio 27a.

rain continues with great violence and want already begins to be echo'd from every corner.' He began to record the duration of his hardships, that day being the 'third day of the rain, first of the famine'.¹³⁰ At this late stage in the expedition Kinloch became aware of the worsening mood amongst the sepoys: 'the people extremely clamorous and wherever I stir'd nothing met me but complaints.'¹³¹

Desertion had troubled the expedition from a much earlier stage. Kinloch reported on the 9th of September, that 'the past night, fourteen men deserted', which he attributed to violent rains and sickness.¹³² Insubordination had also scuppered the initial assault at Sindhuli. By 22nd September the advanced guard of sepoys, once more led by Hogan, having taken the first redoubt of that fort, failed to occupy the larger fort further along the ridge, 'owing chiefly to their, and their black officer's bad behaviour who set them every ill example.'¹³³ The soldiers had refused to wear boots approaching the fort, rendering them vulnerable to sharp rocks and Gorkhali traps, making great noise in the process. To counter this, Kinloch adopted harsh measures, ordering 'that any man who made a noise or fir'd his piece wou'd be immediately put to death and likewise to put on their shoes before they went to storm, to prevent the spikes getting into their feet'.¹³⁴ There were those Kinloch could trust, and those he could not. For example, the commander asked Ensign Hardy to investigate the feasibility of building a road around the Gorkhali defences, who he considered 'a man I cou'd depend upon for such an undertaking,' despite it being 'not this gentleman's turn of duty'.¹³⁵

Disciplinary issues escalated after the capture of Sindhuli, wherein 'the gentlemen complain'd much of the behaviour of the Black Officers, and that the Seapoys appear'd extremely fearfull ever since the second repulse'.¹³⁶ The difficulty with which the expedition overcame that fort, owing in part to the aforementioned resilience of the Gorkhalis and the lack of cannon, surprised the sepoys, challenging the assumption that their campaign would be an easy one. This discontent was then augmented by the imposition of reduced rations on the 16th September. Kinloch wrote, 'not the least appearance of grain from the Choudrey, the people, harrass'd fatigu'd and hungry, began now to be extremely troublesome, and nothing but want, want, want was to be heard over the camp.'¹³⁷

¹³⁰ Ibid., 4th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 18a.

¹³¹ Ibid., 6th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 18b.

¹³² Ibid., 9th September 1767, Book 1, Folio 10b.

¹³³ Ibid., 22nd September 1767, Book 1, Folio 29a.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 22nd September 1767, Book 2, Folio 1b.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 25th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 5a.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 27th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 10a.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 24th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 2b.

Kinloch tried a number of measures to alleviate sepoy concerns. He tried to raise morale by disseminating positive information, for example upon 'hearing [news of] even a small quantity of grain... which I immediately ordered be publish'd'. He also tried deceit, upon hearing the rivers were 'so swell'd that the Bullocks could not pass,' he 'order'd this not to be spoke of'.¹³⁸ This attempt to control knowledge did not work – he underestimated the sepoy's powers of observation: soaked to the skin and aching with hunger, able entirely capable of observing fast flowing rivers and the non-arrival of grain. These measures failing, he moved towards harsher disciplinary measures as a deterrent. His hand was forced on 28th September, in the expedition's preparations to march on Hariharpur: 'Ensign Osborn accus'd a *subedar* of the Pergunnah Sepoys [those from Patna] of Cowerdice which indeed was most flagrant and infamous. I had not a warrant for holding General Court Martial, but there having been many complaints of this nature it was not a time to stand on punctilio.' As the trial finished, 'another *subedar* of the same corps...told me he wou'd not stay at the fort, that if I would not relieve him he desir'd his discharge, and if he went away I might be assur'd his whole company woud follow him.' The second *subedar* did not want to be part of the vanguard left at Sindhuli, perhaps in fear of the surrounding Gorkhalis. Kinloch ordered the same court martial try him and promptly, 'both were sentenc'd to be broke and disgrac'd which was done in presence of the whole detachment'.¹³⁹

This did not bring an end to insubordination, yet Kinloch was happy with its outcome, returning to this tactic at the next instance on 7th October, wherein: 'the Sepoys of the second brigade assembl'd in a tumultuous manner and every man spoke while each seem'd to strive who should be loudest...As I had some reason to think from the beginning that the clamour of the sepoy's did not altogether proceed from the famine, I set on foot an enquiry into the cause of their behaviour, and ensign Woodman discovered it had been existed by Moon Sing a Zemadar of the 1st Battalion'.¹⁴⁰ The *Jemadar* was subject to a court martial, 'first being reduced to a sepoy, then tomtom'd out with a halter round his neck, and given five hundred lashes,' which Kinloch observed was 'in my own opinion both too mild'.¹⁴¹ That number of lashes would effectively kill a man. This was a severe sentence and its passing, alongside Kinloch's belief that it was too mild, lays bare the staunch disciplinary approach he took forward. His next address warned the sepoy's 'they might be assur'd I woud upon no accounts suffer any insolent or mutinous behaviour

¹³⁸ Ibid., 24th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 3b.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 28th September 1767, Book 2, Folio 14a.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 7th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 21b.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 8th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 21b.

among them, and was fully determin'd to put the first man to death with my own hands who was guilty of either'. To which they 'listen'd to what I said and were dismiss'd without the least murmuring'.¹⁴² From this point on Kinloch does not record any complaints. However, his ultimatum did not drive away the rains, nor hunger, nor the Gorkhali threat.

Kinloch's assertion of discipline in itself was not out of the ordinary, but aspects of it were. Firstly, his use of a court martial without proper authority abused a legislative loophole in 1767: frustrated by mutinous sepoys and over-zealous officers alike, the EIC had established a formal code of discipline in 1766. However, it would not be implemented in Bengal until 1768.¹⁴³ That Kinloch would utilize this delay demonstrates the extent of his concern over discipline. Similarly, the reduction of rank and pay for a South Asian officer was not unusual. However, the *subedars*, and to a lesser extent the more subordinate ranks of the *jemadars*, *havildars*, and *naiks*, occupied a critical position of trust, as go-betweens for the European commanders and sepoys.¹⁴⁴ The decisions of the *subedars* and *jemadars* in 1767 to align with the sepoys, and of Kinloch to so ruthlessly reduce their rank and punish them, reflect a significant breakdown of these important intermediary relationships.

From that point on, all the cards were revealed to the sepoy. Initially, notions of pay, prize and adventure lifted their spirits. This had not transpired, and instead they had suffered famine, fever and defeat, culminating in a series of forlorn attempts to cross a swollen river, being in an unknown environment with an increasingly disciplinarian commander. As these events developed and things turned sour, the choice to mutiny or desert seemed more and more inviting. Their likelihood of escape may have been slim, but then, their prospects were bleak regardless, and at least the chances of EIC capture and punishment likewise seemed far-fetched. They had a decision to make, and many chose to flee.

This had a negative influence on the non-belligerent component still remaining – the *coolies* and builders who were no longer protected. Contemporary accounts certainly blamed the mutineers who had witnessed the breaking of the *Jemadar*. The mutinous sepoys were put back in order by Kinloch. Yet they then 'deterred the camp followers from proceeding with the army'.¹⁴⁵ If not verbally persuaded by the sepoys to run, many of the non-belligerents chose to regardless, given the inability of the sepoys to protect them. Kinloch wrote: 'those who had been engaged to supply the troops were so intimidated that

¹⁴² Ibid., 8th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 22b.

¹⁴³ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.125.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.107.

¹⁴⁵ *Memorandum Relative to Capt. Kinloch's Expedition against Nepaul in 1767*, in B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817), p.544.

not a man would move unless escorted by a sufficient force, and the coolies employed in carrying the grain would frequently in the night make off, leaving their burdens where no others would be possessed to take them up.¹⁴⁶

The scale of desertion is unclear within Kinloch's journal. For instance, he recorded on the 13th October that 'last night the bildars, lascars, great many of the coolies and thirty sepoy's deserted'.¹⁴⁷ At this point Kinloch was bed bound through fever, and his diary scribbles are brief, so it is left unanswered whether or not the entirety of the builder and lascar cohorts left, which would be disastrous. Nevertheless, even more left intermittently over the coming nights. On the 14th October Kinloch seemed at loss how to counter this, and considered returning to Sindhuli but could not do so, lamenting that 'supposing I then carried them to that place, their situation would be no better than here, and it was impossible after the hunger they had undergone to carry them to Jannickpore, without losing at least three fourth on the way, and so extremely troublesome were the jungle people now become that had a man only fallen few yards behind the rest, he was sure to be cut off in a most cruel manner'.¹⁴⁸

IV:8 Conclusions

On the 17th October, Kinloch was woken from his fevered sleep by a very strange and sudden noise. He wrote in his diary that he 'soon understood that the sepoy's had taken their arms forc'd the guard and were going off in a body. It being in the dead of night and the matter carried this far with such secrecy, I had no reason to apprehend the worst of consequences and never doubted but it was general...'¹⁴⁹ Both manuscripts stop abruptly at that point. Readers never find out whether it was in fact the sound of the sepoy's deserting en masse, or another calamity. What is clear though is that a great number had left and that Kinloch's measures had failed to deter them. Kinloch's need to go beyond standard levels of discipline suggests that the EIC once more relied on support it could not guarantee. Chatterji estimated an entire four companies absconded, and other reports do not stray far from these figures.¹⁵⁰ The resolution to mutiny on behalf of the hitherto marginalized rank-and-file sepoy is absolutely crucial to the outcome of Kinloch's mission.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.544.

¹⁴⁷ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 *Journal*, 13th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 28a.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 14th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 28b

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 17th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 30b.

¹⁵⁰ Nanda Lal Chatterji, *Verelst Rule in India* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1939), p.53. It is unclear whether Chatterji meant four entire companies, or what was left of four companies. Either way, Kinloch's fighting strength was reduced by around four hundred soldiers.

The significance of the agency of marginalized historical subjects is not that those individuals were decidedly anti-colonialist – many were decisions not to take a particular side, rather than to support or oppose the expedition through provision of boats, food or information. Nor can it be said with much certainty whether they were pre-meditated. Instead, they were decisions made in changing circumstances, as events unfolded around the historical subjects in question, and the loyalties of villagers, sepoys and guides were tried. What is significant is that within the indomitable Himalayan foothills, the decisions that the sepoys, the guides, the Gorkhals and local people made, their action and indeed their inaction, had far reaching consequences. Kinloch could observe them but was quite helpless in containing them, failing to redirect the venture in its spiral towards disaster.

Chapter V – ‘Those Whose Interest Is Against You’: The Aftermath of 1767 and Further EIC Expeditions to Nepal Before 1795

Summary

Chapters V and VI adopt two key arguments: firstly, the events of 1767, determined by marginalized agency, redirected the EIC’s approach to the Himalayas. Secondly, subsequent marginalized agency and influence continued to play a part in future endeavours. Chapter V firstly makes those arguments in relation to Nepal itself, evident in the EIC’s explanations for 1767 and further plans, and secondly places the aftermath of 1767 in relation to broader attitudes and trajectories in Company intervention at the peripheries across South Asia at the time. The chapter then continues that project by investigating further encounters between the Company and Nepal – the espionage of James Logan, military designs on the Himalayas, and the expeditions of George Foxcroft, William Kirkpatrick, and Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan. It is argued that both the 1767 expedition and the ways in which marginalized characters influenced that encounter had a profound impact on how the EIC approached future endeavours, shifting from an overtly military policy to one of subterfuge and diplomacy. A pattern of marginalized, subaltern agency influencing the outcome of further encounters is observed. EIC commanders continued to rely heavily on the support of their guides; their fortunes greatly directed by the actions and interests of those local, intermediary, and oppositional groups that they encountered. Sometimes these draw parallels to the actions of those who played a part in 1767, sometimes similar historical agents act differently in pursuit of different outcomes.

V:1 Immediate Ramifications of 1767 and Marginalized Agency in Plans for the Return to Kathmandu

There are few clues left within the sources that shed light on what happened to Kinloch after the journal cut out. Kinloch ceased to write, either through inability or lack of will. The most recent historical investigation by Thomas Bell details how the expedition’s remnants arrived some days later at Bettiah – from Kinloch’s last reported position at Hariharpur they followed the Bagmati river southwards towards EIC territory.¹ There are no accounts of any pitched battle or conflict, though it is likely that the Gorkhalis

¹ Bell, ‘What Happened to Captain Kinloch’s 1767 Expedition?’, 7-32. Bell refrains from asserting any further details without supporting evidence.

continued to harass the column until at least out of the foothills. There are no extant returns of the missing, wounded or fighting fit within the Company records, though estimates suggest they were severely depleted. If the Nepalese accounts estimating Kinloch's forces at 700 as it marched to Hariharpur are considered accurate, and that the 200 remaining builders and *coolies* then deserted, Kinloch would be left with around 500 personnel. Such an exercise though is futile, given the dearth of sources and inaccuracy with which the Gorkhalis evaluated Kinloch's strength. Kinloch himself survived, as did some of his close allies, including his brother Charles Kinloch and potentially Ensign Alexander Hardy, whose namesake materializes at Bettiah in 1770 as the recipient of further instructions.² The surgeon James Logan also returned.

The closest reference contemporary to Kinloch comes from William Kirkpatrick's account of 1811, drawn from 1793 field notes that he wrote whilst on his own expedition to Kathmandu. This asserts that Kinloch withdrew to Barra in the Tarai, and 'remained there for some time'. Kirkpatrick added that the water there was 'particularly unwholesome', reflecting that 'it is not to be wondered at that Kinloch's detachment suffered so much as it did from sickness'.³ There are further indications unto what happened after Kinloch's journal cut out, as well as commentary on how those events came to pass, in a memorandum on the expedition, dated 6th February 1814, on the eve of the Anglo-Nepalese War.⁴ The unknown author believed that Kinloch's enterprise was principally thwarted by the swelling of a river 'so that it could not be crossed' between Sindhuli and Hariharpur.⁵ Both Kirkpatrick and the memorandum consequently attributed failure to natural forces: poor water, and the river as a barrier, rather than asking why the lascars did create a bridge in that instance. It is an inconsistent conclusion since Kinloch did eventually cross that river, and reach Hariharpur. The author's additional commentary does hint towards the significance of marginalized agency and actions. The memorandum notes that 'the detachment was ill supplied with provisions, and the country people were slow in bringing in the grain,' though does not speculate why they were so.⁶ The author also wrote that the sepoy 'from the first had been disinclined to service'.⁷ These are

² *James Alexander to Lieutenant Alexander Hardy, November 1770*, B.L. IOR/G/28/2B, Patna: Consultations (1770-1771). Hardy appears to have been promoted. Alternatively, this could simply be a namesake, or relative.

³ Colonel William Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul, Being the Substance of Observations Made During A Mission to That Country, in the Year 1793* (London: W. Bulmer & Co, 1811), p.14.

⁴ *Memorandum Relative to Capt. Kinloch's Expedition*, pp.543-547.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.544.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.543.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.544.

however comments that could be gleaned from a reading of Kinloch's journal, rather than any proximity to the expedition, or those involved.

In Calcutta and London, the EIC Company administration received the news of Kinloch's failure with disbelief.⁸ Initially they balanced the gains and losses whilst fighting a rear-guard against the Gorkhalis, then considered whether they had a foothold from which to attempt a second expedition. Within these further encounters and plans it is notable that some lessons were learned, specifically in relation to the roles of marginalized historical agents, whilst others were not.

From Bettiah, Kinloch's forces rallied. The soldiers now occupied a band of the Tarai northeast of Bettiah – present day Barra District and neighbouring Parsa, within which the border city of Birganj lies. They remained consolidating their hold there until 1768. They first captured the Parsa Gadhi, which Kinloch did not consider heavily defended. He wrote to Rumbold assessing the gains:

Barra & Persa are two provinces and Mr Hardy assures me put together are more extensive than the Bettayah. It is the finest country I have seen; large plains & the soil in appearance so fertile that I am certain with inhabitants and proper improvement, might make them yield ten lacks (lakhs) per annum, but above two thirds of that I have seen is grass jungle and by the severity of the late government and its nearness to the hills; the people seem to be poor, are much harassed & are not very plenty considering the apparent richness of the country.⁹

Barra and Parsa were occupied 'for the purpose of reimbursing from its collections the expense of the expedition'.¹⁰ It was returned to Shah within two years on condition that the EIC received an 12,500 rupees in elephants annually as tribute. Whilst the intervention brought no long-term or significant territorial changes for the Company, the events of 1767 damaged Kinloch's pride and health. This motivated him to downplay the cost of defeat by emphasising the bounty of the occupied space, arguing that his capture of Parsa deprived shah 'of an extensive, fertile country, which supplied him largely with both money and grain'.¹¹ It also explains his support for a second expedition, but his reluctance to be involved in such a mission. He reiterated in his correspondence that he would not volunteer to lead a second intervention, stating 'no lucrative views whatever could tempt me to be a leader'. Kinloch emphasized that he was no coward, that 'honour obliges me to

⁸ Raj, *Expedition*, p.4.

⁹ *George Kinloch to Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of Patna dated Persa, December 27 1767*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

¹⁰ *Memorandum Relative to Capt. Kinloch's Expedition*, p.545.

¹¹ *George Kinloch to Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of Patna, dated Barra, December 25 1767*, in B.L. IOR/P/A/8 Bengal Proceedings 20 Dec 1767-21 Nov 1768.

wish it in my power to put an end to the work I have begun,' but that he did not consider 'rushing on certain dangers to be at all consistent with bravery'.¹² Kinloch was greatly concerned for his reputation, which exacerbated the sickness he sustained in the foothills. This was not without precedent: one account from the Carnatic Wars details how an EIC captain whose sepoys mutinied had to capitulate to the French. He reportedly became fatally sick from shame and worry: 'so sensibly affected by his misfortune that it threw him into a fever of which he died'.¹³

Within Kinloch's correspondence from the new territories, it is clear that his experiences in the foothills did not shake entrenched representations of oriental despotism. There is a continuity in his depiction of the Gorkhalis as marauders. Though his depleted forces had more success in the Barra and Parsa plains landscape outside of monsoon season, he remained oblivious to Gorkhali fighting strength and manoeuvres, reliant on scouts and guides, 'I have not yet been able for certain to know which way the enemy are gone, but am told towards Hurrurpore'.¹⁴ He continued in his representation of Shah as an oriental despot and his insistence that his soldiers were pressed into fighting, 'such are his cruelty and severity that the people have no other choice but his service'.¹⁵ He continued to judge the Gorkhalis a potent threat to the EIC, citing that if Nepal Valley fell, Shah would be able to increase his forces of 50,000 to 200,000, a force that no other hill states could counter, his armies 'flushed with the conquest of that country... will no doubt prove a very troublesome enemy in the low countries'.¹⁶

Kinloch and Rumbold also drew plans for a further expedition. Within these plans, the EIC mostly remained blind to the previous significance of marginalized agency. Instead, emphasis was placed on difficulties marching in the rain, and provisioning of food, without recognizing that these were not naturally occurring challenges. Kinloch wrote that 'the two great evils that I suffered, rain & the want of grain, will now be removed'.¹⁷ More precisely though it was the failure or refusal of marginalized, local agents to provide boats and *dandies*, and that of the grain merchant to provide provisions, that Kinloch suffered from. The EIC believed these problems overcome: it was no longer monsoon season and they could have found an alternative grain supplier. They did not contemplate alternative ways in which non-co-operation from local people could scupper a new expedition. Instead, Kinloch assumed once more that the local subaltern would support the Company

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lawrence, *Narrative of the War on the Coast of Coromandel*, p.64

¹⁴ George Kinloch to Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of Patna dated Persa, December 27 1767.

¹⁵ George Kinloch to Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of Patna, dated Barra, December 25 1767.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

over the Gorkhalis. He believed that once he was through the foothills into the valley, the local populace ‘will not...long dispute the matter with me’.¹⁸ He furthermore believed Shah would not be able to spare any troops, since they were ‘so much employed that he cannot send off any considerable body without untying their hands [the Malla rajas]’.¹⁹ After Kinloch had observed local landowners supporting the Gorkhalis whilst villagers fled from his sepoys, and having observed Shah reinforce the defences at Sindhuli and Hariharpur with ease, it is peculiar that he could so confidently assume local support.

The marginalized agency that undermined the 1767 expedition was nevertheless given greater consideration at the second attempt. More sensitivity was given in the preparatory stage towards local support and local knowledge – the agent at Bettiah, Edward Golding, was entrusted to rally the local petty rajas in the hills for support on the basis that they were ‘Shah’s enemies, having reason to fear his growing power’.²⁰ Their support was solicited not just to prevent them siding with the Gorkhalis, as was the case with the local elite at Sindhuli, but to ensure they bolstered an EIC expedition with ‘the bodys of their men who are mountaineers’.²¹ This time around, the company wanted to ensure they had soldiers with some experience of the foothills, since their sepoys’ shortcomings had proved so critical previously. Greater thought was given to the expedition’s composition. This time a full battalion and artillery to counter the new challenge of Gorkhali barricades and fortifications was proposed.²² It would seem moreover that the Company realized they had rushed into military action, upon the advice and impressions given by the Malla messengers. Their new endeavour would be more cautious, and ‘was not to be set foot in a day or to be gone about rashly’.²³

The proposed return to Kathmandu did not go ahead. Instead, by 1769 Nepal Valley had been conquered. The Gorkhalis finally defeated Kathmandu on a festival day. Whilst the people and majority of the guards celebrated, courtiers who had sided with Shah opened the gates. It was these people who proved crucial, deciding to betray the city most likely in return for assurances of their safety and reward. A full-strength EIC column would have significantly reinforced Kathmandu and boosted morale through the visible support of the British. However, Kinloch’s arrival there would not have prevented the city’s capture: it needed food and artillery, neither of which Kinloch brought.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Amatya, ‘British Diplomacy’, p.2.

²³ *George Kinloch to Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of Patna, dated Barra, December 25 1767.*

The expedition nevertheless had some longer-term implications for Gorkhali-EIC encounters and relations. The 1767 invasion deterred Shah from courting any alliance with the EIC, fostering a scepticism of British intentions. Referring to a future Company invasion, the *Diwyopades* advised that ‘one day that force will come’.²⁴ 1767 reduced Nepalese enthusiasm for trade with the EIC, meaning the latter had to negotiate harder and make greater sacrifices on duties - tariffs from 1767 to 1816 have been estimated to favour Nepal by five to one.²⁵ It also spurred the Gorkhalis to invest heavily in border defences – increasingly promoting the Tarai as a natural barrier after the devastating effect it had on the health of Kinloch’s soldiers, and recognizing that, owing to the difficulty of transporting artillery in the foothills, simple redoubts of earthwork and timber could stop an EIC column (many of Nepal’s border forts were constructed in the years between Kinloch’s expedition and the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814. The *Diwyopades* advised that the EIC had ‘taken the plains’. It subsequently recommended that Nepal ‘prepare forts... set traps ... and on a higher place cannon should be placed’, so that ‘in the gaps of the mountains an iron door should be built’).²⁶ Shah is also reputed to have armed some elite units with muskets taken from Kinloch’s soldiers, though there seems to be some uncertainty surrounding this. The *Diwyopades* states that they ‘took their flintlocks’.²⁷ However, Kirkpatrick visiting in 1793 wrote that he had been told to expect the summer residence at Nuwakot to be adorned with them, then noted their absence.²⁸ Nevertheless by the time the two belligerents once more squared up to each other in 1814, Nepal had increasingly shifted towards the use of matchlocks, possessing a far more considerable number than expected.²⁹

V:2 The Withdrawal from Hostilities in a Wider Context

After the fall of Kathmandu, the EIC altered its policy towards Nepal. Conciliatory letters and complimentary presents were sent to Shah implying the Company had acted out of ignorance: ‘now as the praises of the addressee [Shah] have been heard from every quarter, the English have ceased to assist the Raja of Nepal and are desirous of entering into

²⁴ *Diwyopades*, p.42.

²⁵ Jha, *Battles of the New Republic*, p.21.

²⁶ *Diwyopades*, p.42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.46.

²⁸ ‘I had been told, previous to my visit, that this temple [in the palace compound at Nuwakot] was also decorated by some arms lost by Captain Kinloch’s detachment; but either my information was not correct, or they had been removed in compliment to me’. Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.116.

²⁹ Paget, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions*, p.4.

friendship with the addressee'.³⁰ The lands Kinloch had seized were returned to Gorkha hands.³¹ The ongoing conflict between Kinloch's forces and those territories in the Tarai seemingly drained EIC reserves, the Board of Directors writing that 'the inconvenience and expense which must attend an expedition against the Goorkha Rajah would far outweigh the advantages to be reaped from the recovery of these Pergunnahs, and therefore disapprove of proceeding to hostile measures unless the Rajah should refuse to pay the tribute or attempt to commit depredations on the Bahar districts'.³² Protestations were made from Shitab Roy at Patna, as well as the EIC merchants there, but these were ignored.³³ Nepalese historians explain this reversal as a symptom of Shah's rise: 'the Company realized they were backing the wrong horse in Jaya Prakash because they saw that the Mallas were of no match to Shah, and more than that the Mallas had lost their power'.³⁴ However, the decision would not have been taken lightly, since it involved conceding Shah's authority to the detriment of the ousted Christian missionaries and British traders.

Instead, the decision to abandon military designs on Nepal at that time was influenced by events elsewhere across South Asia. The EIC were struggling in the 1767-1769 Anglo-Mysore War, and within a few years would also fight the Marathas and Rohillas. This stretched the Madras and Bengal armies, and costs were spiralling. Vast expenditures on the new fort at Calcutta, war in South India in 1768, rising dividends for investors in London, and an annual tribute of £400,000 paid to the British government after 1767, all contributed to a growing financial crisis for the Company, leading to its near bankruptcy in London in 1772.³⁵ Supplying any expedition during the Bengal Famine furthermore would have incurred costs and the hostility of Bengalis and EIC directors alike, aggrieved with affairs in India. Cost-cutting measures were a priority in the aftermath of 1767. The board wrote to Calcutta on 11th November 1768, 'as we look with a favourable eye upon every attempt for the extension of commerce, we do not disapprove of the Expedition to Napaul, and are sorry it failed of success – you did right not to renew the expedition till the state of your forces would better admit of it, and to hold your

³⁰ *Hastings to Shah, November 13th 1769*, in Imanshing Chemjong, *Kirat History and Culture*, (Kalimpong: Amar Nembang, 2014), p.187

³¹ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.2.

³² *Select Committee to Joseph Jekyll Esq, Chief at Patna, 10th August 1771*, published by S.C. Sarkar, 'Some Interesting Documents', *Bengal Past and Present*, XLIV (1932), p.51.

³³ *Letter and Enclosure from the Council of Revenue at Patna, 9th July 1771*, in Sarkar, 'Some Interesting Documents', p.46.

³⁴ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.2.

³⁵ Travers, 'Ideology and British Expansion', p.16.

possession of the lands taken from the Gorkha Rajah as an indemnification for the expenses.³⁶ Their concern was how to recuperate losses.

Back in Patna, efforts were made to draw a line under the 1767 venture. First and foremost, a scapegoat was found. Lacking the financial backing and resolve to authorize the second expedition, Rumbold threw Kinloch to the wolves of Calcutta in his letter to the Select Committee: 'a too hasty decision and improvident progress when in want of provisions, against which Capt Kinloch had been duly warned, rendered [the expedition] unsuccessful.'³⁷ Kinloch's apparent adventuring combined with Rumbold's growing 'nabob' reputation was further frowned upon by the Board of Directors, who wrote to incoming EIC governor John Cartier: 'we cannot but take notice that the Napaul Expedition was not only undertaken without consulting him [Colonel Smith, the military commander over Rumbold] but the commanding officer of the detachment on that service [Kinloch] was never to have corresponded with him or sent him his returns, which is contrary to the rules of military subordination.'³⁸ Channa Wickremesekera has demonstrated that sepoy failures could be attributed to the way in which they were commanded by EIC officers, or whether they had enough European officers.³⁹ This was the case in 1767, drawing attention away from sepoy action and agency in the foothills. Kinloch was exonerated in time. However, his health never recovered from the illness he caught that year and he never returned to the Himalayan foothills, passing away early in 1769. His brother Charles left the EIC, aggrieved by his terms of employment, and served for the Dutch East India Company (hereafter VOC.) There he disputed once more with his employers, being briefly imprisoned before likewise dying of illness.⁴⁰ They were both buried in Bengal.

News of the 1767 expedition did not reach the British press, despite the frequency with which Indian events were reported and public appetite for such news. It is notably missing from the many newspapers and monthly periodicals in circulation, which have been called 'the most important means by which information and speculation about India and the East India Company were disseminated to large numbers of people'.⁴¹ This was a notable omission – the press had shared news about the EIC and its campaigns 'on a regular and frequent basis since at least the Seven Years War'.⁴² It is likely that the Board of

³⁶ B.L. IOR/E/4/619, Bengal Despatches, p.241.

³⁷ From the Select Committee Proceedings, cited in Raj, *Expedition*, p.14.

³⁸ B.L. IOR/E/4/619, Bengal Despatches, p.260.

³⁹ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p.167.

⁴⁰ Raj, *Expedition*, p.17.

⁴¹ Jeremy Osborn, 'India and the East India Company in the Public Sphere of Eighteenth-Century Britain', in Bowen, Lincoln, Rigby, eds, *The Worlds of the East India Company*, p.203.

⁴² Ibid.

Directors took measures to limit knowledge of the 1767 expedition. They often held political leverage over newspapers, funding them and granting printing permission: ‘wealthy men such as Robert Clive and Warren Hastings befriended men in the press with their ill-gotten gains from India.’⁴³ The EIC therefore carefully curated news about their affairs, for instance ‘planting well-timed information in the newspapers artificially to raise and lower the price of Company stock’.⁴⁴ The individual brokers in this information provision were usually the governors and military commanders themselves, in a position to determine which failures and successes were included in their press despatches.⁴⁵ They would also have been acutely aware of the wider readership of these reports: the publication of victory narratives was particularly important given that British newspapers were circulated widely in European cities. One observer in 1756 noted that the *London Chronicle* seemed to have a greater continental circulation than any other paper.⁴⁶ Likewise, the restriction of defeat narratives such as that of 1767 was imperative.

The directors only had limited control over news returning from India – they tried and failed to prevent regular correspondence being disseminated before their official despatches could be digested, and they went to great lengths to challenge any newspaper reports inaccurately representing the state of affairs in Asia. As a result, the directors gave much thought to the information from India they reported to the General Court, knowing that whatever they announced would be reported to the press. Likewise, in their Company bulletins they published a rosy version of events, one that would neither deter investors nor dampen public expectations of the riches of India. The information that the EIC bulletins offered was not read uncritically, and there existed a climate of public suspicion and concern over Company activities that these measures did little to alleviate.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, they were able to contain the news of defeat in 1767.

The expedition did have public consequences regardless. Firstly, it instigated a changing attitude towards adventuring, and prize money as an incentive. This emerges during the First Rohilla War of 1773 to 1774, in which Company sepoys marched for the Nawab of Awadh. During this campaign Warren Hastings, recently appointed Governor-General, expressed concern over the motives of the soldiers, particularly the notion of prize money and the treasures held in Rohilla forts. Writing to Colonel Champion, he lamented ‘there is one subject that alarms me. The very idea of prize money suggests to my

⁴³ Ibid., p.204.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.209.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.219.

⁴⁷ Bowen, *The Business of Empire*, pp.166-167.

remembrance the former disorders which arose in our army from this source, and had almost proved fatal to it'.⁴⁸ The expectation that joining an expeditionary force brought enhanced pay and the 'spoils of war' still haunted the EIC almost a decade on from the *Batta* Mutiny, despite efforts by the Company to crack down on this through the withdrawal of additional field pay.

Company directors and politicians became more reserved before committing to peripheral wars and inter-Indian conflicts altogether. Growing ministerial intervention in the Company's affairs hoped to prevent servants in India from involving the Company in unwanted wars, in spaces that could be made commercially profitable without military action. When the House of Commons resolved in 1782 that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extent of dominion, are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation', they were stating a principle that was universally accepted.⁴⁹ London became sceptical of preparations for expeditions such as that of 1767, wondering whether alternative expedients had been considered before those on the periphery turned to armed force. It became possible for South Asian forces to greatly incite Company officials and cause agitation along its borders without the guarantee that there would be a punitive expedition – first the EIC would evaluate what was lost, and whether that loss warranted an attempt to recuperate. This was the case when the Raja of Ramgarh plundered Company territory in October and November 1770, wherein the Select Committee first asked that a subordinate 'enquire into the particulars of this affair and transmit an account of them' before rushing into any action.⁵⁰ This did not stop Company agents from themselves engineering military action, as was the case in 1767, but it does show an increased metropolitan awareness to it. There was also greater condemnation of patronage in the preceding years, with greater suspicion towards the family links and bonds of friendship between those advocating conflict, those appointing military officials, and those commanding the consequent expedition. This was the case in the First Anglo-Maratha War, the Select Committee reprimanding commanders for the 'partiality in their choice of officers'.⁵¹ In particular there was perceived a Scottish clique within the Bengali military, which Kinloch could well have been a part of, that was viewed with suspicion.⁵²

⁴⁸ *Warren Hastings to Colonel Champion, 21 May 1774*, B.L. IOR/H/83, Distribution of Prize-Money, bounty and booty (1756-1804).

⁴⁹ Marshall, 'British Expansion', p.31.

⁵⁰ As per correspondence: *James Alexander to Captain Jacob Carnac, 13th November 1770*, B.L. IOR/G/28/2B, Patna: Consultations (1770-1771).

⁵¹ B.L. IOR/E/4/619, Bengal Despatches, p.367.

⁵² For a summary, see G.J. Bryant 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *The Scottish Historical Review*, LXIV 1:117 (April, 1985), 2-41.

The EIC increasingly sought guarantees from Indian powers that the costs of intervention would be underwritten and honoured by Indian capital. There was some precedent for this before 1767, in Forde's expedition to Golconda in 1758. This was remarkably similar in composition and context to Kinloch's: 'consisting of five hundred Europeans, one company of artillery, and sixteen hundred sepoys', marching in October with some urgency, intervening on behalf of a South Asian power.⁵³ Before departing Forde sought agreement in advance from the Raja of Vizagapatam that they would 'pay the extra expense of our army during the time they should act together'.⁵⁴ This however did not set significant enough an example for Kinloch to do likewise. He was perhaps unaware of these steps taken some years prior to his own appointment in Madras.

These changing policies were not triggered solely by the Nepalese expedition. Disappointing revenues, the crippling effect of the Bengal Famine and the 1772 Banking Crisis all served as critical checks on EIC enthusiasm for military intervention and expenditure. The grant of the *divani* was expected to reap great benefits, yet throughout the 1760s revenues lagged behind speculation. This in turn caused great financial troubles domestically: stocks were traded based upon wild estimates of Company revenue, an estimated four million pounds profit.⁵⁵ By some counts, the *divani* actually generated losses rather than profits – private trade, corruption and exploitation of popular trade goods profit representing the actual wealth drain.⁵⁶ The Bengal Famine, as much a consequence as a cause, augmented these dire financial straits, leading to the 1772 banking crisis. The difference however is that, as opposed to the 1767 expedition, these are not lacking in scholarship. They all feature prominently in Company histories, such as those of Keay, Tuck, and Lawson.⁵⁷ Nor were they absent from public discourse. The Company was a source of significant taxation and investment, and its fortunes were the subject of national political debate.⁵⁸ Indeed, a further check on EIC military adventures were the frequent parliamentary interventions, mandated by their financial rescues.⁵⁹

Efforts to condemn the rapaciousness of EIC agents and curb their adventuring did not mean this ceased altogether, in what is perhaps characteristic of the disparity between instruction from London and action in India. Neither the sins of the 1760s nor the famine nor banking crisis inverted either the practice of or concerns over 'nabobism'.

⁵³ *Narrative of Colonel Forde's Expedition to Golconda*, in Cambridge, *An Account of the War In India*, p.270.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.271.

⁵⁵ Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2013), p.108.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.112.

⁵⁷ Patrick Tuck, ed., *The East India Company: 1600-1858*, Vol.III (London: Routledge, 1998), p.viii.

⁵⁸ Lawson, *The East India Company*, p.106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.104.

Thomas Rumbold himself become Governor of Madras, amassing a personal fortune of £750,000 through bribes and pay-offs from 1778 to 1780. A parliamentary inquiry damaged his reputation, but came to nothing.⁶⁰ Likewise Clive Hastings was yet to assume power. Though far from being the worst culprit, his would be the most infamous of trials for corruption. Similarly, intervention and adventuring without authority from Calcutta or London continued. Notably, the campaign into the Deccan that resulted in the EIC's humiliating defeat at Wadgaon was not endorsed by Hastings and Calcutta promptly rejected the ensuing treaty, escalating the Anglo-Maratha War. Whilst the Company thus officially erred on the side of caution before entering future conflicts in the Himalayas, or elsewhere in South Asia, that did not prevent such conflicts eventually being committed to – EIC expansion in South Asia from 1767 to the final defeat of the Marathas in 1818 suggests such caution did not ultimately win the day. There were moreover greater political incentives to wage war against certain rivals, for instance the aggressive Hyder Ali and his French advisors, meaning borderlands incidents legitimized EIC invasion and were welcomed rather than treated with hesitancy. Caution nevertheless played a part in some arenas, and partly altered the trajectory of EIC expansion. It certainly diverted their attentions away from Nepal after 1767.

V:3 Logan's Activities in Nepal

The EIC did not give up on relations or interventions in Nepal entirely. After 1767 came a series of expeditions, both EIC officiated and independent, individual and group, militant, commercial or diplomatic, in which the British encountered the Nepalese and vice versa. This chapter now investigates the role of marginalized historical agents within these encounters from 1767 to 1793, beginning with isolated travellers before studying some further EIC expeditions. For each, it is asked whether the various parties involved in these encounters helped shape EIC representations of the Himalayas, whether their actions helped direct events, and what comparisons can be made with 1767.

The years either side of 1767 saw a trickle of individual adventurers and traders encountering Nepal. Very little is known of these ventures – there are no diaries within the company archives with which to compare instances of marginalized agency alongside that of Kinloch, and very few letters from the adventurer-traders themselves, other than some secondary references and permissions to proceed from the Select Committee in Calcutta. It is nevertheless possible to observe some degree of marginalized agency – often acting

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.111.

without official instruction or completely independent of the EIC, these individuals themselves could be considered marginalized actors in the histories of European-Himalayan encounters, let alone the people and places of Nepal that they interacted with.

Many of the independent traders mentioned in Chapter III such as Mirtle and Peacock continued to operate either side of 1767. However, the first individual to enter Nepal after the invasion of 1767 presents an intriguing alternative ending to that affair. This is the mysterious, embittered fate of James Logan, the surgeon from the very same expedition, who returned to Nepal shortly after, on a vendetta to undermine and oust Shah from power. Little is known of his person other than Kinloch's account. He was greatly admired as a translator, having assisted with 'his knowledge of the language on all occasions'.⁶¹ We learn from the journal that Logan 'very gallantly offer'd his service as an officer' to take part in the first assault on Sindhuli Gadhi, losing the end of his finger and 'receiving a dangerous blow on the head' in the process.⁶² He survived, and made it back to Bettiah, then promptly offered his services for a second expedition to Henry Verelst. Logan wrote that he had heard of the Company's plans to explore trade further, and that he was 'ready to undertake a journey'.⁶³

Little is known of Logan's adventuring. There exists a chain of correspondence with the EIC, in which he 'permitted to undertake it as he proposed'.⁶⁴ This has led to some conflicting accounts of his objectives, though most believed the enterprise was conciliatory and commercial. Amatya for example considered it 'the best and brilliant example of the policy of conciliation played,' further noting 'the main aim of the mission was neither a political nor military one, but purely commercial'.⁶⁵ Likewise British historians considered Logan exemplary of a 'less aggressive approach'.⁶⁶ Logan spent great care outlining the benefits of trade between Patna and Kathmandu, stating it was 'capable of being much more considerable than it ever was'.⁶⁷ He was given a letter from Hastings implying his was sent to Kathmandu in order to open up trade avenues, that read as follows: 'as the opening up of trade between his country and Bengal would be mutually beneficial, the above said gentleman [Logan] would be deputed to arrange the matter'.⁶⁸

⁶¹ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 8th October 1767, Book 2, Folio 22b.

⁶² Ibid., 22nd September 1767, Book 1, Folio 30b.

⁶³ James Logan, *Memorandum to the Board of Directors at Fort William, August 25th 1769*, published by Sarkar, 'Some Interesting Documents', p.43.

⁶⁴ Ibid p.42.

⁶⁵ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.2.

⁶⁶ Derek Waller, *The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015) p.172.

⁶⁷ Logan, *Memorandum*, p.43.

⁶⁸ *Hastings to Shah, November 13th 1769*, p.187.

However, contrary to this narrative, Logan did not return to Nepal with solely conciliatory intentions. His correspondence demonstrated a desire to engineer a Gorkhali downfall, with both strategic and personal motivations. His memorandums displayed much disapproval towards Shah and recommended to Calcutta that they continued their support of the exiled Jaya Prakash Malla. He assured Verelst that he ‘will undertake to find him [Jaya Prakash] out’, and ‘personally confer with him’, adding ‘there is no doubt that many of his old subjects are still attached to him’. Logan was confident that ‘a small force...would be sufficient to re-establish his government’.⁶⁹ Moreover, he was injured in the 1767 venture and had readily volunteered for the abortive 1768 attempt. Logan certainly would have made a suitable emissary given his language skills and previous time experience of Himalayan travel, yet these attributes also made for a suitable spy. In addition, he had experience of war in this theatre –something valued higher after 1767. Therefore, whilst Logan’s pretences were to reason with Shah, carrying with him correspondence from Hastings to the Gorkhali ruler in case he was stopped, all the while he engaged in espionage and subterfuge: planning to solicit the support of local rajas against the Gorkhalis. Logan for example mentioned the Raja of Morang who had ‘formerly proposed to Kinloch to join his force’, and had ‘invited me to his capital in the hills to settle the terms of this coalition’. Logan was ‘pretty sure of a hearty welcome’, and coincidentally was confident that ‘here I would get intelligent guides’, it what was perhaps a reference to the disappointment of Ram Das in 1767.⁷⁰ Certainly, Logan saw the potential for improved trade. However he did not envision the EIC conducting that trade with Shah, but a restored Jaya Prakash Malla. It is interesting that the EIC would send such a candidate with the history of trauma and vendetta that Logan had on a purely commercial enterprise, into a space where he could exercise individual agency. The EIC were not solely conciliatory, but were instead hedging their bets.

Logan’s contemporary George Bogle wrote whilst in Tibet some years later that the Panchen Lama had received a letter from Shah, stating that ‘a Firangi had been sent back from Nepal’, wanting to know if the two were connected.⁷¹ Although this indicates that Logan’s mission to establish trade failed, it is less clear whether or not he returned any intelligence, or drew any local support away from Shah. We can nevertheless interpret from this encounter some features of EIC Himalayan policy – that they would endorse such a duplicitous enterprise is indicative of how highly they valued existing knowledge of the

⁶⁹ James Logan, *Memorandum*, p.43.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁷¹ Clements R. Markham, ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, edited, with notes, and introduction and lives of Mr Bogle and Mr Manning (London: Trübner & Co., 1876), p.187.

Himalayas, or the possibility of augmenting it. Logan's rogue status draws attention to ways in which colonialism could be delivered by intermediary characters. Alternatively, the dual agenda of the enterprise implies 1767 had thrown that EIC policy into disarray.

V:4 'Plan Of Attack of a Mountainous Country': Further Plans for Nepal and the Morang Intervention

In 1774 the EIC received a further request for help against Shah, on this occasion written by the Raja of Morang, Karna Singh. The Gorkhalis had conquered Nepal Valley and were pushing westwards towards Morang in the Kirant region. Karna Singh requested military aid to check Shah, who likewise requested they stay neutral.⁷² The difficulties that undermined Kinloch, and EIC sensitivity towards the influence of marginalized agency, can be read between the lines of two mysterious documents within the India Office Records relating to that possible intervention. The first document, entitled *A Sketch for a Plan of Attack of A Mountainous Country in India*, is a handwritten advisory tract on unbound paper instructing the reader in a series of military considerations when invading such a landscape.⁷³ The second document is entitled *Plan for Attack on napaul with Anecdotes*. Its subheading reads *Plan for an Attack on the Napaul Rajah, to Oblige him to quite Morung & intently to reduce him or bring him to such terms as the Government thinks necessary*. Seven proposals are then listed relating to the expedition's composition, giving suggestions unto the route taken and making further logistical recommendations.⁷⁴

Although the two documents are undated, we can place certain parameters on them: Being in Warren Hastings' private collection they very likely date before his departure from office in 1785, and could not possibly date later than his death in 1818 unless by significant archival error. The *Sketch for a Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country in India* could date earlier than Hastings' arrival in India in 1773. The *Plan for Attack on Napaul with Anecdotes* dates from roughly around 1774, since it is written in response to Shah's annexation of Morang that year, referring directly to both him and that conquest. Within this document are referenced certain individuals who occupied the same post as they did in Kinloch's correspondence, such as Captain Grant who was stationed as the military command alongside William Golding at Bettiah, suggesting there were few years between that expedition and these plans. The authorial details are omitted and the handwriting is

⁷² Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.3.

⁷³ 'A Sketch for a Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country in India,' in Add MS 39892 Warren Hastings Papers, Vol. XXII (ff. 141). Papers relating to India and the East.

⁷⁴ 'Plan for an Attack on Napaul' in Add MS 39892 Warren Hastings Papers, Vol. XXII (ff. 141). Papers relating to India and the East.

fairly undistinguished. They could have been written by a clerk, transcribing for a senior officer, potentially Hastings or a military official. The two documents could have been written by different authors – creating the possibility that Kinloch himself wrote the earlier *Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country in India*. The greater likelihood is that both documents were written by the same author in response to the invasion of Morang. Yet that unknown author had a detailed knowledge of the events of 1767, perhaps even direct experience, such are the parallels between the troubles Kinloch faced and the recommendations of the two documents. It is possible that James Logan was the author. His basic principles of Shah as a despot and the local rajas as potential allies form the basis for these plans. He could have still been in EIC service in 1774, and did have the required knowledge of the events of 1767 evident in those two documents. The *Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country* does not refer to Nepal directly and could have been written in preparation for the 1772 invasion of Cooch Behar, discussed in chapter VI.

Kinloch's initial troubles in Bihar occasioned by the monsoon march and difficulties obtaining a food supply are highlighted within these documents as problems to counter. The *Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country* suggests the expedition should 'march if possible early in the cold season that you may have full time before you to secure the country in your possession before rains set in, and have your provisions collected for the wet months, so that you may not fall a sacrifice to sickness by being obliged to march about them looking for subsistence'.⁷⁵

Just as Kinloch brought into the Himalayas a confidence in EIC soldiers, so the author likewise valued an assumed superior strategy and tactics: 'You need not fear success let the enemy numbers be what they will, for a mountainous and wood country is a more favourable theatre for practising the wiles and stratagems [sic] of war than open country, therefore a European officer has ... the advantage in such a situation.'⁷⁶ Yet the author also emphasized the need for artillery: 'Nothing can be more useful with you in a hilly country than royals [Artillery units] they are easily carried and are of infinite service in clearing the heights of the enemy and drawing them from their forts upon the hills.'⁷⁷ They potentially recalled Kinloch's despair in face of hastily constructed Gorkhali defences beyond Sindhuli and Hariharpur, and his lamenting the missing cannon, slowly making its way up from Janakpur, that would otherwise have made short work of them.

⁷⁵ 'Plan for an Attack on Napaul', p.1.

⁷⁶ 'A Sketch for a Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country in India,' p.1.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.3.

The author instructs their reader to gather intelligence on the route, that ‘your next care should be to enquire well into all the particulars relating to the country you are ordered to attack, the nature of the roads, the passes and nature of them, of the rivers their breadth and depth, of the forts their strength, garrison and situation, if there has not been a map of the country before.’⁷⁸ Poor roads, difficult, prodigious mountain passes, unfordable rivers and heavily fortified Gorkhali defences all featured to Kinloch’s detriment. The author prioritizes local knowledge, given that its absence hindered the 1767 expedition upon encountering these challenges, instructing ‘above all things look out for men of ability who are acquainted with the roads, forts, rivers, and spare no money or attention to render these men faithful to your service’.⁷⁹ Within this instruction, the efforts advised to guarantee their loyalty implies that there had been past difficulty securing that, once more raising questions over the actions of Kinloch’s guides.

The author recommends that a prospective commander should consider local interests, evoking the Mugitar landowner Ramchandra Parsai who reportedly supported the Gorkhalis. They advised to ‘get powers if possible to treat with all the principle people who border upon the country intended to be attacked, find out whether your success would coincide with their interests or not, for you would reap great advantage by knowing their particulars, by discovering those whose interest is against you and getting the assistance of those who wish well to the affair on which you are employed’. Importantly, the author demonstrates suspicion not just of those opposed to an EIC invasion, but also towards those invested in an expedition’s success, ‘for their description of the country those whose interest it is that you should be possessed of it of course will soften the difficulties to you whilst the others will increase them.’ The notion that they could likewise provide false information echoes the impression of ease given by the messengers in 1767. The writer thus recommends that upon hearing these accounts, the commander should ‘take the medium between them and you may form a pretty just notion of the truth’.⁸⁰

The guerrilla tactics of the Gorkhalis, their harassing of the EIC column, and Kinloch’s obliviousness to affairs at the rear or within advanced detachments such as that commanded by Hogan towards Hariharpur, are also echoed in the *plan of attack*. The author recommends that an expedition should always have flanking parties, and that upon one part of the column being attacked, the nearby officer should ‘acquaint the commanding officer with the nature of the attack made upon his people, the steps he has taken in

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.2.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

consequence, for in a woody and hilly country the commanding officer often loses the advantage of a view of what is done in all parts and must therefore trust for a while the judgement of others'.⁸¹ The writer advised to 'avoid making halts in your march as much as possible as nothing is more discouraging to your own men or advantageous to your enemy, as the roads are narrow and the line of course much lengthened, the front ought to march extremely slow'.⁸² After explaining how they would counter the Gorkhalis should they attack the column's rear, he asserts that 'an officer can always turn the attack of the enemy into an advantage if he has superior genius and knowledge in the art of war'.⁸³ This final sentiment was potentially aimed at Kinloch, since his journal reported low morale as a result of the Gorkhalis attacking stragglers.

The conduct and command of sepoys features in the *Plan of Attack*. Just as Kinloch wrote in his journal that the first assault on Sindhuli Gadhi was undermined by fear amongst the sepoys, this writer instructs: 'Never move at height if you have reason to think the sepoys not seeing their officers or knowing of the number of the enemy will imagine dangers innumerable, and if once they are thrown into confusion at height all is lost.' Similarly the *Plan of Attack* contains instruction in the composition, discipline and welfare of the camp followers, advising 'you will have no place to apply to for conveniences of any kind, have good lascars therefore with you capable of constructing bridges mending carriages and diggers to dig wells upon occasion or make mines'.⁸⁴ This draws plenty of parallels with the marginalized camp followers and support units in 1767 – the builders who struggled to repair the road from Janakpur, the lascars who fled on the approach to Hariharpur, the failure to build bridges over the rushing rivers of the foothills and the shortage of safe drinking water. Just as Kinloch had his concerns over the discipline of the baggage train, likewise the writer recommends that his reader should 'take care and examine constantly the state of the *coolies*, cattle and carriage, else the poor *coolies* and cattle will be cheated of their provisions by the *Circar*, and the carriages will go out of repair for want of attention which is much neglected by the common people in this country, the lives of numbers may depend therefore upon your inspection into these particulars'.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.2-3.

⁸² Ibid., p.3.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.4-5.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.3.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.5. The *Circar* in this context derives from *Sarkar*, a regional unit and component of a *Soubab*, and most likely refers to the regional governor given the same *Circar* title, tasked with provisioning the column.

By 1774 the Gorkhali conquests had gathered pace, moving eastwards through Limbu towards Sikkim, swallowing up Morang.⁸⁶ This threat combined with the request for help from Karna Singh of Morang prompted the writing of the *Plan for an Attack on Napaul*, intending 'to oblige him [Shah] to quit' the region.⁸⁷ The author of that document hoped to avoid the same pitfalls that Kinloch was drawn in to. For instance the *Attack on Nepaul* document recommends drawing sepoys from across different Bengal outposts, suggesting the expedition should consist of 'three companies from Capt. Robinson's Battalions at Mungheer [Munger],' and 'some companies from that at Srinagepoore [Sringerpur]' to then 'join the officer who is in command of the expedition at Purnea [Purnia]'.⁸⁸ The author did not advise drawing the ranks from one specific Company factory, as was the case with Patna in 1767, wherein the local agent Rumbold was able to select his officers and sepoys. They were likewise wary of sourcing all sepoys from one garrison, where they could have had shared experiences of Company service and similar levels of loyalty or resentment.

Shah's network of spies, neglected historical agents reporting back on the EIC's preparations at Patna and Jaya Prakash Malla's court in Kathmandu were able to sabotage Kinloch's expedition. In 1774 the author of the *Attack on Napaul* hoped to counter such Gorkhali intelligence through a series of measures. They firstly advised making 'several manoeuvres and false attacks to draw the rajah's troops & attention that way and to make him believe the sole intention of that expedition is to drive him away from his new acquired conquests,' before advising upon another layer of deception: 'let a battalion march to Bettiah as if to relieve Captain Grant & there remain till further orders... let the commanding officer set off with orders in his pocket for the battalion that was sent as if to relieve Captain Grant with the artillery, and as many companies as can be spared from Captain Grant's post to obey his orders in everything.'⁸⁹ The expedition's purpose would not be so widely publicized that Shah would anticipate it. There would also be greater counter-surveillance measures, with detachments advised to 'watch the motions of the Rajah'.⁹⁰

The document gives further consideration into the composition of the expedition. As with the *Plan of Attack*, the writer of the *Attack on Napaul* proposes sending a greater artillery detachment to counter Gorkhali defences, recommending 'two 12 pounders, 60 or 70 experienced lascars with royals and proper ammunition for the whole and two artillery

⁸⁶ The *Plan for an Attack on Napaul* names this region Morung and is not to be confused with that region in Nagaland.

⁸⁷ 'Plan for an Attack on Napaul', p.1.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.2.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.3.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

officers be ordered to proceed directly to Patna and there to wait for instructions and their instructions may be to proceed to Bettiah'. The writer presses the haste with which this artillery should be assembled and moved into position: 'this is to be done immediately, that the guns and ammunitions should get up in time enough.'⁹¹ After all, Kinloch did have cannon in 1767. The problem he faced was that his artillery caravan did not move at the same pace as his sepoy units.

The *Attack on Napaul* continued to recognize the importance of Kathmandu, recommending the expedition march from Bettiah immediately into Nepal Valley, where the commander would 'make his utmost efforts to gain possession of the capital before the arrival of the Rajah, perceiving his country in danger, moves back as is most probable'.⁹² This time though there would be two columns: once Shah returned to Kathmandu the detachments previously watching his movements would seize Morang. Within this plan, the writer once more assumed local support just as Kinloch did, suggesting that 'once the Rajah leaves the Morung territory it will naturally return under the governance of its old master'.⁹³ Yet they also recommended that before the commanding officer set out he should 'inform all the petty rajahs of the motives of his expedition to curb the ambition of the Gorkha & to reinstate them in their possessions'.⁹⁴ Like that of the *Plan of Attack*, this writer also considered the landlords in 1767 who supported Shah. Moreover, soliciting the support of the petty rajas was something Kinloch advocated for the second relief mission in 1768.

There are huge methodological questions incurred by these two documents – we know so little about their authorship, the speculation that they were written by someone involved in Kinloch's expedition or with experience of expeditions into the foothills notwithstanding. Moreover, we know little about the documents' readership. Were they ever shared, and who were they intended for? Since we find these two documents in the collections of the Governor-General, Hastings himself could potentially have read them, written them, or had them transcribed, yet this is unknown. The 1774 intervention in Morang did not go ahead, so it is impossible to say whether this advice would have been observed in the event that it was needed. However, these plans do show greater consideration towards how marginalized forces, such as the local population, could influence the journey. This may have been lost in historical analysis of Kinloch's

⁹¹ Ibid., p.2.

⁹² Ibid., p.3.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.3-4.

expedition, but we see here that the potential actions of villagers, merchants, guides and sepoys in 1767 did feature in future EIC preparations.

V:5 Regional Officials, the Capuchins, and Foxcroft's Expedition to Nepal, 1783

The next major enterprise into Nepal was that of George Foxcroft in 1783. Most British and Nepalese accounts of this venture consider it a diplomatic, commercial venture rather than a military one. He entered the foothills from Bengal with a selection of gifts and a letter from Warren Hastings to present to the Nepalese Raja, hoping to re-open trade.⁹⁵ Yet Foxcroft's mission was also an individual, adventuring endeavour. Foxcroft carried those gifts from Hastings, yet there is no record of his instruction to proceed, or plans to send a diplomatic, commercial expedition. Instead, there is an earlier record of Foxcroft requesting and being denied the role of envoy.⁹⁶ Foxcroft would not have proceeded without permission in 1783, given that previous refusal. Hastings either acquiesced and appointed Foxcroft emissary or allowed him to proceed in a non-official capacity. The latter is most likely given that there is no official record of his venture, which was modest in size and scale. Moreover, although he did not enter Nepal in pursuit of monetary gains, Foxcroft did have personal ambitions for the enterprise – to accumulate knowledge with which he could write a history of Nepal.⁹⁷ In this respect, Foxcroft's expedition was hoping to consolidate orientalist intelligence. Given Hastings's patronage of Indian arts, and officers who showed they could master them, Foxcroft's desire to add to the pantheon of South Asian history writing was an attempt to secure the blessings of the Governor-General: for his expedition, for his career beyond that, perhaps for support in the publication of his account.

This expedition has relevance for the study of marginalized historical agents and their role within Anglo-Nepalese encounters, as various local interests intervened to prevent Foxcroft from reaching Kathmandu. Bernardo Michael, who patched together the very few occasions on which Foxcroft appears within the British documents alongside Capuchin letters and the nuances of the Gorkha Court in the 1780s, has tentatively highlighted these.

⁹⁵ For instance, Waller, *The Pundits*, p.172; Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.3; K.C. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960) p.51.

⁹⁶ Bernardo A. Michael, 'Describing Gorkha: Faskirap Saheb's Mission to Gorkha, 1783', *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 25:2 (July, 1998), p.280.

⁹⁷ *George Foxcroft to Warren Hastings 3rd June 1783*, in Michael, 'Describing Gorkha', p.280.

Foxcroft was able to proceed with relative ease through the Tarai.⁹⁸ It is difficult to say whether this stage of the journey was achieved with the support of the local villagers, or in spite of non-co-operation. This was notably a region that had seen revenues increase three-fold after having passed from the Sens of Makwanpur to Gorkha, though whether this was from improved yield or increased taxation, Bernardo Michael and the primary sources are unclear.⁹⁹ He then ran into problems at Hetauda, being refused permission to proceed by the Gorkhali commander of that area, Sardar Nabir Singh.¹⁰⁰

That decision was potentially influenced by intelligence from the Capuchin mission stationed at Bettiah. It would not be the first time a British expedition crossed paths en route to Nepal with that Capuchin order. Kinloch met with Padre Mark in 1767, yet the priest returning from Kathmandu had no information for him.¹⁰¹ In 1783 the Capuchins reportedly passed intelligence in the other direction. Foxcroft reported to Calcutta that Nabir Singh would not let him proceed after having received a letter from the Capuchins, claiming the expedition's true intentions were to establish a factory in Kathmandu.¹⁰² This course of events was the result of either deception or misunderstanding. Although a permanent settlement in Nepal may have been a long-term ambition, Foxcroft was not equipped to set up a factory, nor did he have permission from either Nepal or Calcutta. The Capuchins perhaps misunderstood his aim to open a commercial dialogue. A more cynical explanation could be that they were wary of other European influences resident in the hill country, and chose to send a cautionary letter to the Gorkha court. There was no great animosity between the Capuchins and British at Bettiah. However, the Capuchins were a minority sect, an offshoot from the Franciscan order that by the end of the eighteenth century reportedly numbered just over 30,000 worldwide. Theirs was a tenuous position that they guarded carefully – sharing missionary space in Nepal with the denominations of the EIC and the British would not be a welcome prospect.

The Capuchin letter was alternatively a fiction of Nabir Singh, grasping for excuses, aware that a large faction of the Gorkhali court would meet his decision to permit Europeans to proceed with hostility, Kinloch's failed intervention being a recent memory. It is noteworthy firstly that upon Foxcroft's return the Capuchins denied this interference; secondly that Foxcroft himself was made aware of its existence by the Gorkhali *vakil*, a lower-ranking emissary at Bettiah.¹⁰³ That would mean a marginalized historical agent, who

⁹⁸ *George Foxcroft to Warren Hastings 3rd June 1783*, in Michael, 'Describing Gorkha', p.286.

⁹⁹ Michael, 'Describing Gorkha', p.280.

¹⁰⁰ Likely a corruption of *Sirdar*. See the glossary.

¹⁰¹ This event, 3rd September 1767, was detailed more thoroughly in chapter IV.

¹⁰² Michael, 'Describing Gorkha', p.280.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.282.

could have been deflecting blame away from a Gorkhali anti-British policy towards inter-European factionalism, played a significant role. Either way, political agendas behind the scenes blocked Foxcroft's progress, and that of the EIC.

V:6 The Sino-Nepalese War and Kirkpatrick's Expedition, 1793

In 1793, William Kirkpatrick headed a delegation despatched to Kathmandu from Bengal, in order to mediate in the Sino-Nepalese War. The EIC hoped this would open the region to British trade. Kirkpatrick also travelled to Nepal with personal aspirations: to write the first detailed English language record of the mountainous kingdom. From a critical reading of the consequent published *Account of Nepaul* alongside his personal correspondence with Governor-General Cornwallis, Nepalese accounts, and other contemporary observations, it is evident that marginalized historical agents, some of whom could be deemed subaltern, wielded great influence over the fate of the expedition. They determined the parameters of Kirkpatrick's experience, both physical and representational, despite the fortitude of orientalist tropes. Ultimately, whilst the EIC considered this enterprise an abject failure, these hitherto marginalized individuals were able to achieve their aims and gain reward, culminating in the 1795 expedition of Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan which is subsequently discussed.

Kirkpatrick's 1793 expedition was in many ways a result of inter-Himalayan political manoeuvring. By the late eighteenth century, relations between Tibet and the expanding state of Nepal had drastically deteriorated. Accounts both past and present attribute this to the fact that the Newari currency became 'much debased' within the valley during the later Malla years. Upon Gorkhali conquest, Shah reinstated a purer quality of coinage for Nepal, yet such was the quantity of debased coin already in neighbouring Tibet that it could not be voided or recalled. This proved difficult in transactions between the two, with no agreement on exchange rates or where to attribute blame, which effectively drove trade to a standstill.¹⁰⁴ Rumours abounded that the Tibetans were mixing dust into salt exports, the frontier became more hostile with heavier fortifications and military presence, and the standoff became an issue of national prestige.¹⁰⁵ When in 1788 the Panchen Lama threatened to draw upon Chinese support and expel the Gorkhali from its borders, the latter invaded. Initially the conflict progressed well for Nepal, yet by 1792, a

¹⁰⁴ Drawn from *Extract from a Memorial of the Court of Kathmandu, relative to the Origin of the War with Tibet*, in Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.339.

¹⁰⁵ As was argued by Amatya, who downplayed the Nepalese debasement of coin in favour of the degraded salt interpretation, which in itself is a continuity of the competing national interpretations for who was at fault. 'British Diplomacy', p.3.

substantial Chinese column had entered the fray and driven the Gorkhali as far back as Nuwakot.

With a formidable host on its doorstep, Nepal in 1792 thus faced a similar predicament to that of Jaya Prakash Malla in 1767. Whether to solicit the help of the EIC was once more a decision swayed by courtly interests and concerns over British influence in Nepal. The regent Bahadur Shah was Prithvi Narayan Shah's second son. His elder brother Pratap Singh had ruled for three years until his death in 1778, leaving his own son the infantile Rana Bahadur Shah as king, with his mother Rajendra Laxmi Devi as regent. The following years were marked by bitter factionalism between those supporting the king's mother and those supporting the king's uncle, Bahadur Shah. Rajendra Laxmi Devi died in 1785 and the regency passed to Bahadur Shah, though there remained in 1792 plenty at court who opposed him, questioning his legitimacy and his authority over Prithvi Narayan Shah's grandson on the throne, who was by then nearing adulthood. He had to make allies and guarantee loyalties. Kirkpatrick observed this, writing that 'considerations of expediency, suggested by a solicitude to maintain himself in his situation, have often compelled him [Bahadur Shah] to conciliate his colleagues, by compliances'.¹⁰⁶ He needed to tread carefully: inviting the British after his father had opposed them did not cast him in the monarchical mould of Prithvi Narayan Shah, but that of the vanquished Mallas. This would not endear him to his courtiers or people.

Moreover, there were French artillerymen at the court of Kathmandu. It was these individuals that Kirkpatrick referred to when he wrote that Bahadur Shah also kept 'some European adventurers in his service, who would seem to have promised much but to have performed nothing'.¹⁰⁷ Such Europeans were often found casting cannon or engineering for Indian rulers. In 1754 for instance there were Irish engineering officers serving the Nawab of Arcot alongside the British.¹⁰⁸ The decline of French power in India from the Battle of Wandiwash onwards was not apparent to EIC officials at the time, and French mercenaries were regarded with suspicion. Mysore recruited a French-trained, musket bearing and heavily French staffed brigade of 20,000; from 1784 Benoit De Boigne revolutionized the Maratha ruler Scindia's armies, with three brigades of European-style infantry.¹⁰⁹ The colonial nation-state rivalries between these individuals can be over-exaggerated. Instead, these individuals were not governed by loyalty to France. They were adventurers looking for profit and acting in their own interests. Many relied on the EIC to

¹⁰⁶ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.197.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.215.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence, *Narrative of the War on the Coast of Coromandel*, p.7.

¹⁰⁹ Wickremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, pp.70-72.

remit profits back to their home countries. De Boigne's contract with Scindia even stipulated that he did not personally have to fight the English. It is nevertheless plausible that national allegiances did affect the cannon-casters' reaction to the Kirkpatrick venture. Firstly, their presence outside the French territory of Pondicherry by no means ensured their relationship and loyalty to their homeland was distant and faint. Secondly, increased EIC presence in Kathmandu would herald their replacement by Company artillerymen, particularly if Kirkpatrick was right to suggest that they had not made much progress. If they had any leverage over the regent it would have benefitted them to emphasize the hostility and threat of the EIC.

Ultimately, the scale of threat, and pressure from those who observed that, swayed Bahadur Shah. He wrote to Lord Cornwallis in Calcutta requesting military assistance. Perhaps pre-empting this, the Tibetans likewise wrote, requesting the British did not intercede on behalf of the Gorkhalis, adding that the Bahadur Shah will 'write lies and calamities' in order to enlist EIC support.¹¹⁰ Cornwallis received and responded to both letters in the summer of 1792, yet contrary to the thoughts of historians writing on Kirkpatrick, he did not act upon them independently.¹¹¹ Like Bahadur Shah within his royal court, Cornwallis had to balance competing agendas within the EIC – appeasing the Gorkhalis suited the hinterland merchants and stations, yet the Company also sought in-roads to China. The EIC had just signed a commercial treaty with Nepal, yet ambassadors had recently reached Lhasa for the first time. He therefore turned to others for help, consulting his envoy, Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan, and his agents at Patna and Bettiah, requesting an account of the situation. The course of action he decided upon benefitted those consulted parties: he opted to stay neutral, offering to send a mediator to Kathmandu. That expedition would serve furthermore as a fact-finding enterprise, and as an opportunity to negotiate once more a commercial agreement, potentially even establish a residency in Nepal.¹¹²

Kirkpatrick was the brother of James Achilles Kirkpatrick, resident to the court of Hyderabad from 1798 to 1803, case-studied in William Dalrymple's *White Mughals*.¹¹³ A small group of dignitaries, including Lieutenants Gerard, Scott and Knox (who would later

¹¹⁰ *From the Dalai Lama at Pootla Lasssa, to Lord Cornwallis, received 3rd August 1792*, in Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.348.

¹¹¹ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', & Prayag Raj Sharma, review of 'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', by Colonel William Kirkpatrick, *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 1:1, (December 1973).

¹¹² *From Lord Cornwallis to the Dalai Lama at Pootla Lasssa 25th September 1792*, and *From Lord Cornwallis to the Rajah of Nepaul, 30th September 1792*, in Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.348.

¹¹³ William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (London: Harper Collins, 2002).

become resident at Kathmandu) as well as a surgeon, Adam Freer, accompanied Kirkpatrick. A small military detachment of two companies offered some protection.¹¹⁴ Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan joined the expedition, having ensured it went ahead, and secured for himself an emissary position amongst Kirkpatrick's entourage. A Hindu mendicant, Guru Gajraj Misra, was employed as guide. Misra's involvement draws strong parallels with that of Ram Das in 1767: he had previously been employed as a messenger, and had reportedly used that position to make the case to Bahadur Shah that the EIC offer was a dangerous one to turn down, adding nuance to Kadir Khan's entreaties, who instead emphasised EIC mediation skills.¹¹⁵ There were also numerous *coolies* and *barkaras*. Porters were to be recruited en route. In comparison to the 1767 expedition, the EIC waited for preferable travelling conditions despite the urgency, and did not depart until the spring of 1793. The relatively small military detachment reflected the diplomatic purpose of the enterprise and a reluctance to provoke hostilities or resentment from the local people whom the expedition once more would rely on for provisions.

Like Kinloch before him, Kirkpatrick was instructed to keep a record of his journey: notable places, routes and events. He kept field notes, which he wrote up initially as a memoir, now within the India Office Records, and shortly after published as *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* in 1811.¹¹⁶ Whilst there are plenty of extant versions of this account, this chapter draws from the first edition, and the account in its memoir form within the archive. Despite professions to the contrary within the preface, it was always intended to be read by a wider audience, greater informed by the burgeoning market for 'oriental histories' and travel literature than that of Kinloch. Kirkpatrick's memoirs were the intellectual property of the Company; it is with their patronage and sanctioning that it was published, and to the directors that it was addressed with gratitude.¹¹⁷ Published eighteen years after the expedition, Kirkpatrick's book emerged on the eve of war between the EIC and Nepal, a context quite different to that in which he set out, wherein the Company hoped to act as peace-brokers, not invaders. He drew the history of Nepal from one particular historical text that was made available to him whilst in the country. The maps and drawings within the 1811 first edition had been edited by the publisher's artist, which could detract from their accuracy.¹¹⁸ Kirkpatrick's *Account of Nepal* first consists of

¹¹⁴ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.xi.

¹¹⁵ Rana Bahadur to Cornwallis, received at Calcutta, January 2nd, 1793, *Political Consultation No.15.*, in B.L. IOR/P/4/18 Bengal Proceedings (4 Jan 1793-4 Mar 1793).

¹¹⁶ The memoir derived from field notes is held in London: B.L. IOR/H/395, *Memoir of Nepal* by Captain William Kirkpatrick. The full bibliographic details for the first published edition are Colonel William Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul, Being the Substance of Observations Made During A Mission to That Country, in the Year 1793* (London: W. Bulmer & Co, 1811).

¹¹⁷ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.xii.

¹¹⁸ Such is the opinion of Sharma, review of 'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', p.104.

five chapters describing his route to Nepal Valley, punctuated with additional detail, followed by four chapters containing further cultural, religious, historical and political observations. His journal can be read alongside his memoir papers, and other official letters and consultations relating to the expedition that were couriered to Governor-General Cornwallis in Calcutta. These letters received much archival attention as the first EIC delegation to reach Kathmandu, and many feature in the *Account of Nepal* appendix.

The preface to the 1811 edition came with the caveat that the text had been ‘put into the hands of a literary gentleman for the purpose of its being properly prepared to meet the public eye,’ explaining that the memoirs ‘were thrown together in greater haste than was perhaps entirely compatible either with much accuracy of style, or clearness of arrangement’.¹¹⁹ Its publication was delayed, awaiting news from Knox’s residency in Nepal from 1802 to 1803 – there was a fear that it could be rendered redundant by a more up to date account, and a notion that it could instead be augmented by or grafted onto that report.¹²⁰ The publisher tired of this and having incurred great expense, claimed in the preface to have ‘been reduced to the necessity of sending the work forth nearly in the same state in which it came to his hands’.¹²¹ This assertion certainly seems intentional; to avoid the accusation that he had manipulated it substantially.

Kirkpatrick himself added that he did not feel he had stayed in Nepal a long enough duration to add to British ‘knowledge’.¹²² He was after all only resident in Kathmandu for two weeks. For this reason, Kirkpatrick is distanced from the published version, and it is important to credit other individuals whose voices are present, to unknown and varying degrees, within that text – the Court of Directors who made it available for publication, the friends who the preface author asserts persuaded him to publish, as well as the editor, despite their claim to have left the memoirs intact. A parallel reading with the writing of Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, who published that long-awaited account from Knox’s Nepal residency some years later, sheds some light on the changes that these other voices instigated. Buchanan-Hamilton did not believe that some passages covering Hinduism and the route to Kathmandu could have been written by Kirkpatrick, further arguing the author had not faithfully transcribed Kirkpatrick’s Indian language words.¹²³ Kirkpatrick after all was in a position of slight authority over other orientalist

¹¹⁹ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.xii.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.xiii.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹²³ Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Company, 1819) pp.5-7. Francis Buchanan became Francis Hamilton in later life upon his departure from

scholars, certainly over London publishers: he had previously written his own *Hindoo Grammar* book recommended to the Select Committee for Company publication.¹²⁴ To navigate these, one has to take great care upon finding a discrepancy between the two different Kirkpatrick manuscripts, the field memoir and the *Account*, asking why a writer would choose to make the edit.

Kirkpatrick's experience drew heavily on pre-existing expectations and an orientalist understanding of the Himalayan foothills. For instance, within his memoirs Kirkpatrick reflected on the 1767 expedition, one of the rare near-contemporary accounts of that clash. Kirkpatrick notably neglects to attribute any EIC responsibility unto why it failed, instead arguing Kathmandu fell before Kinloch could relieve the city as a result of Ranjit Malla of Bhaktapur allying with Shah, and that the detachment fell victim to sickness. Whilst this itself is true, it discounts the marginalized agency highlighted in chapter IV. In contrast, he dismissed the Nepalese accounts of the encounter that he heard from Bahadur Shah, which emphasized military superiority and the clash at Sindhuli, writing 'without authentic records, it is clouded by mythological fables'.¹²⁵ Kirkpatrick was dismissive of Nepalese record keeping and their version of events, valuing instead recorded accounts and observation. Yet his re-writing of the 1767 campaign omits details that could prove embarrassing to the EIC, instead drawing attention to Nepalese betrayals.

Kirkpatrick furthermore orientalized Shah in his attempt to validate the stories of brutality at Kirtipur: 'The reduction of this place [Kirtipur] cost the Ghoorkali so much trouble, that in resentment of the resistance made by the inhabitants, he barbarously caused all the males he captured in it to be deprived of their noses'.¹²⁶ Kirkpatrick's explanation for how he came upon this account demonstrates how the event was used to emphasize Gorkhali cruelty without any discussion of the scale of this retribution, nor comparison of South Asian and Company punishment in the eighteenth century, as per the argument made in chapter III: 'We came to the knowledge of this fact in consequence of observing among the porters who transported our baggage over the hills, a remarkable number of noseless men, the singularity of the circumstance leading us to inquire into the cause of it.' However, it is doubtful that these were veterans of Kirtipur: that would have involved heavy recruitment of Kirtipur porters in Bengal, who were all of adult age twenty-six years previously. Instead, Kirkpatrick observed a number of convicted criminals, mutilated and

India and the inheritance of his mother's estate in 1815. Buchanan-Hamilton by which his works are now most often identified was his botanical-authorial title.

¹²⁴ B.L. IOR/E/4/628 Correspondence with India, p.461. I have sadly been unable to find this text and it remains unclear whether its proposed publication was accepted.

¹²⁵ B.L. IOR/H/395, Memoir of Nepal by Captain William Kirkpatrick, p.413.

¹²⁶ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.164.

reduced to porter occupations, then augmented that observation with the accounts of the Capuchins. This ‘maiming of limbs’ was quite a common punishment, being considered the most preferable of five possible ‘severe punishments’ for serious crimes, according to Francis Buchanan-Hamilton upon his visit in 1802 (the others included ‘confiscation of the whole estate’, ‘banishment of the whole family’, ‘degradation of the whole family to the lowest tribe’, and ‘death by cutting the throat’. It is unsurprising that officials opted for the maiming instead.)¹²⁷ By recalling Kirtipur, the porters kept their criminal past concealed. Kirkpatrick was thus critical of Nepalese and Gorkhali historical accounts in both these examples, reducing the Nepalese to a passive role, dismissing their record-keeping and supporting visions of barbarism with his own observation.

Kirkpatrick relied on those around him to provide further details on anything beyond his line of sight. Yet the exact identities and roles of these individuals are quite vague, rarely explained beyond the identifier ‘the people I am with say,’ or alternatively, ‘I am told that.’¹²⁸ Kirkpatrick often followed the identification of Nepalese knowledge with a dismissal of its veracity. For example the assertion that the Tibetans forbade shawl goats from leaving the country, a fact that Kirkpatrick accompanied with the caveat ‘which I derive entirely from the report of the Nepaul people,’ was footnoted as incorrect as per the contradicting report of a European observer, Samuel Turner, who ‘had several of them brought from Tibet to Bengal’.¹²⁹ There was a purpose behind these identifiers – the reader could note which components of the account were a result of Kirkpatrick’s own observations, and consider them verified since they were observed by European eyes, and could brand those relayed to him by South Asian intermediaries as unfounded or untrustworthy.

These practices disguised and discredited the extent to which Nepalese sources contributed towards information transmission and knowledge. Yet the details of Kirkpatrick’s account, the parameters of his experience, and the success of his enterprise were greatly shaped by marginalized historical agency. Within this encounter, it played a great part alongside the fortitude of existing orientalist tropes. C.A. Bayly wrote that colonial knowledge was derived to a considerable extent from Indian knowledge, ‘albeit torn out of context and distorted by fear and prejudice.’¹³⁰ It is precisely at the intersection

¹²⁷ Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.95.

¹²⁸ One such exception being a *subedar* within Kirkpatrick’s Gorkhali chaperone cohort, who provided some detail on the favourable terms of military service. Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.103.

¹²⁹ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.133. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton later waded into this debate, suggesting the goats Turner described were quite clearly smaller, and thus a different breed altogether. Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.200.

¹³⁰ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.7.

between what Kirkpatrick expected to observe, and what he was told by marginalized, South Asian sources, that his account of Nepal was formulated.

Such marginalized agency almost scuppered the expedition's very outset when Nepal and China conducted a truce before Kirkpatrick departed. The mood amongst Nepalese and Chinese rank-and-file soldiers, weary of a campaign during the Himalayan winter, threatened the ability of both sides to continue the conflict. Whilst the former's numbers had been severely depleted in successive withdrawals, battered by the snows and the cold, the latter experienced a fractured relationship with their Tibetan hosts – the requisitioning of local flour and livestock by the Chinese army aggravated villagers, who did little to speed its supply as the war continued.¹³¹ Despite having held the Chinese forces on the doorstep at Nuwakot near Kathmandu, Bahadur Shah had submitted and signed a widely unpopular peace treaty. The war having ended, citizens of Kathmandu became increasingly hostile towards the size and agenda of Kirkpatrick's entourage rumoured to be approaching Nepal.

These developments ceased the expedition's *raison d'être*. It now faced the confusion of the *soubahs* - regional governors between Kirkpatrick and his destination, as well as the Nepalese envoys at Calcutta and Patna, unsure whether to permit him passage given that the war had concluded. They held the expedition at Patna, awaiting permission from the Nepalese Durbar to let the British proceed, and the hurrying back and forth of *barkaras* and emissaries.¹³² Bahadur Shah likewise took his time deliberating how his disaffected court would react, having recently signed the humiliating peace agreement. He eventually opted against damaging EIC relations, permitting passage. Difficulties in recruiting porters and the early onset of rains further delayed the expedition.¹³³

Once en route, the significance of local support and agency is evident from the outset of Kirkpatrick's *Account of Nepal*, as he made his way through the Tarai, winding up through the foothills before dropping down into the Nepal Valley. Like others before him, Kirkpatrick and his surveyor Gerard struggled with measuring distance. They were reduced to tracking their progress by time observations, then comparing them at the end of the march. Such a method was very unreliable as Kirkpatrick conceded himself, and the expedition often found themselves in the dark about their location, reliant on the words of

¹³¹ Mayura Jang Kunwar, 'China and War in the Himalayas, 1792-1793', *The English Historical Review*, 77:303 (April, 1962), p.292.

¹³² Sharma, review of 'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', p.98.

¹³³ *From Colonel Kirkpatrick to the Right Honourable Earl Cornwallis, 16th February 1793*, in Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.348.

his guide Gajraj Misra who he described as his ‘oral authority’.¹³⁴ They also struggled to feed the entourage, Kirkpatrick describing the difficulties in obtaining provisions from local producers for a single day, without the help of Nepalese officials either in the region or accompanying him.¹³⁵

From Kirkpatrick’s arrival at the Nepalese borders, the expedition was chaperoned by a Nepalese military detachment. What he was able to observe, interpret and detail within his account was framed by this. These soldiers, commanded by a *sirdar*, and the *soubab* government officials provided him with all the geographical information he was not able to immediately perceive. It is apparent from Kirkpatrick’s description that these military commanders acted with relative freedom, particularly the smaller garrisons, commanded by an *omrah*, who ‘are everywhere wholly independent of the civil governors; their garrisons too, are chiefly composed of troops raised and formed by themselves, the regulars, or those of the line, being only occasionally employed under them; they have lands assigned to them for the support of themselves and men, and rank very high among the orders of the state’.¹³⁶ This proposed degree of independence from Kathmandu gives greater pertinence to the choices made by a commander in the Tarai who notably chaperoned Kirkpatrick to Nepal along a western arc shadowing the route of the Bagmati, despite his interest in alternative routes and a desire to take the most expedient road, that of Sindhuli further east (which the 1767 expedition had attempted to traverse.) Potentially, that *omrah* hoped to give Kirkpatrick the impression that Nepal was only accessed with difficulty – something further apparent in their decidedly hostile translation of road and place names that Kirkpatrick would not himself perceive, for instance describing the above route as the ‘sword-edge road’.¹³⁷

Within the published account of Kirkpatrick’s memoir, there is evidence of an extraordinary value placed on local agency by the Nepalese officials. Having arrived in Makwanpur from the Tarai, Kirkpatrick observed the agricultural wealth of the valley and attributed it to complete tax immunity for the local growers. Consulting his interpreter, he was told this was offered in case the deposed regional ruler of the Sen dynasty sought to re-establish his control there.¹³⁸ He speculated that ‘it may therefore be thought necessary, or

¹³⁴ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.6.

¹³⁵ Sharma, review of ‘An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal’, p.102. This difficulty could have been due to a food shortage whilst the Nepalese army encamped and consumed resources at Nuwakot.

¹³⁶ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.55.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.21. It is unclear whether this road did have a Nepalese name. It may have been treacherous, but there were also frequent settlements at Sindhuli, Khurkot, Dumja and Dhulikhel. The *omrah* perhaps wanted to keep the extent of the *Gadhi* fortifications from European eyes.

¹³⁸ The Sen Raja at this time resided within EIC territory at Benares amongst other exiles.

at least advisable, by the Nepaul government, to give the inhabitants of this distance [sic] such an interest in the permanence of its own authority, as shall leave them nothing to hope, but much to fear, from the success of an invader, whether it be their former master, or any other power'.¹³⁹ The military chaperones relating this to Kirkpatrick could have deliberately portrayed Gorkhali rule in Nepal as just and accommodating rather than martial, and should be taken with as much suspicion as the British official's commitment to the despot trope. On the other hand, this demonstrates a degree of caution and wariness around the interests of villagers in this space.

Upon arrival, Kirkpatrick was first taken to Nuwakot, then to an encampment outside Kathmandu. He did not leave this site for the fortnight he was there. All observations from this point on were derivative from informants and from his occasional audiences with the regent Bahadur Shah and the young king Rana Bahadur Shah. He relied heavily on the 'invaluable assistance of Gajraj Misra and Abdul Kadir Khan'.¹⁴⁰ His attempt therefore to give an account of the country is characterized by his own professions of limitation and ignorance. In total he passed only seven weeks in Nepal.

Beyond his intention to describe the country for the purpose of travel writing, he was also hindered in his commercial, diplomatic enterprise. By the time Kirkpatrick arrived in Nepal, the courtiers who undoubtedly had leverage over Bahadur Shah had tired of concessions to both the Chinese and the British. Kirkpatrick wrote that Bahadur's conciliatory measures 'according to the declaration of an intelligent person who communicated with me freely on this subject, have reduced the strength and energy of the Goorkhali dominion to the mere shadow of what it was under the more vigorous, or, more properly speaking, the more arbitrary sway of Purthi Nerain [Prithvi Narayan Shah]'.¹⁴¹ The courtiers of Nepal within this narrative are hardly subaltern by most definitions, but their agency and influence has previously been relatively marginalized, at least within either British or royalist-centred Nepalese histories. Their leverage over the political and diplomatic concerns of Nepal decided the fate of the Kirkpatrick expedition. A significant proportion of the court found that having already concluded the Nepalese-Chinese treaty, British presence in the valley no longer had any value. Some historians have even suggested the original, existing British-Nepalese treaty signed in 1790 was only acceded to in the hope that it would ensure British support against any possible Chinese counter attack (this was between two Nepalese offensives).¹⁴² The country's diplomats, by many accounts

¹³⁹ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.24.

¹⁴⁰ Leo Rose, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 71.

¹⁴¹ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.197.

¹⁴² Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', pp.3-4.

suspicious of EIC intentions, were perhaps apprehensive of a treaty that did not specifically offer the military assistance requested. However, the omission of such a promise could be a symptom of that very same suspicion – a fear that its formal inclusion could give the EIC a licence to station soldiers in Nepal. If that were the case and the Nepalese were expecting assistance on the basis of the pre-existing commercial treaty without it having specifically stated military support would be offered, Kirkpatrick's expedition would have faced a challenge merely to cement the existing commercial terms let alone enhance them, since there was an unwritten assumption or expectation of support that had not been forthcoming.

Kirkpatrick was hesitant in advancing his own concerns, having been made acutely aware by Gajraj Misra of the threat his presence posed to Bahadur Shah.¹⁴³ He was shortly instructed to leave, having made no advances on the trade agreement. Exasperated, he departed concluding that 'I have now ascertained with sufficient certainty that my residency at this court was not to be hoped for'.¹⁴⁴ The expedition potentially brought more detriment than benefit to any existing relationship: Kirkpatrick was not subtle in his personal endeavours to gather material for his book, which observers considered clear evidence of espionage and intelligence gathering.¹⁴⁵ His presence and note-taking in Kathmandu after the war had concluded represented an EIC interference in Nepalese politics that would not have been tolerated by Prithvi Narayan Shah.¹⁴⁶ The EIC's inconsequential intervention also appears to have sabotaged (in part) Britain's unsuccessful ambassadorial visit to China the following year. Envoy Lord Macartney found he was rebuked at the negotiating table by none other than Duke Fu Kang-an, commander of the Chinese troops in Nepal, who attributed his failure at Nuwakot to the intervention of British soldiers.¹⁴⁷ The Chinese had retreated well before Kirkpatrick's entourage arrived in Kathmandu, yet Duke Fu Kang-an later became aware of their presence in the valley, and either mistook the numbers of his military guard or believed the expedition to have played some strategic, advisory role in the preceding battle. How pivotal this coincidence was in comparison to larger Chinese commercial ambitions and policies is of course questionable.

¹⁴³ Rose, *Nepal*, p.70.

¹⁴⁴ *From Colonel Kirkpatrick to the Most Noble Marquis Cornwallis 19th March 1793, 4th April 1793, 10th November 1793*, in Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.358.

¹⁴⁵ Manandhar, 'British Residents', p.6.

¹⁴⁶ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.4.

¹⁴⁷ Kunwar, 'China and War in the Himalayas', p.284.

V:7 The Appointment of a South Asian Emissary: Kadir Khan's Expedition, 1795

British attempts to establish a presence in Nepal did not stop at Kirkpatrick, and the next venture attempted is very significant for a study of marginalized agency. In 1795 the EIC sent a new expedition that was critically different to those that had preceded it. They sent a Bengali, none other than Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan, not simply as a messenger passing the letters of Governor-Generals Hastings, Cornwallis or John Shore, nor a guide conducting others through the foothills like Ram Das or Gajraj Misra, but as an emissary in his own right, entrusted with the responsibility of representing and negotiating on behalf of the EIC.

Unlike the exploits of Kirkpatrick, Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan's 1795 venture rarely features in narratives of the EIC in the Himalayas and there is comparatively scant archival material. Khan presumably did write or at least was instructed to write either an expedition journal or a memoir of his own, since he was acting on behalf of the EIC in an official capacity and consequently was expected to document the venture as any other commander. It is unlikely that Khan would be excused from the provision of written reports because of his South Asian identity –the EIC's demand for and scarcity of colonial knowledge of the Himalayas supersedes that. Furthermore, Kadir Khan in this instance was not acting in a *barkara* messaging capacity but an ambassadorial one - he was well versed in translating, speaking and writing, in Persian, English, Bengali, and the Kathmandu and Gorkha languages of Newari and Khas respectively – he was employed on the basis that he could carefully select his words, and be accountable for them. A record of those words was expected. The absence within the archive of any surviving such document reflects a greater issue of the physical marginalizing of Indian colonial accounts, rendered more subject to selective archival practice by its authorship. Kadir Khan's account was perhaps more likely to be destroyed or removed since his words were inscribed with less authority than those of Kirkpatrick or Kinloch.

The choice to send a Bengali intermediary was an acceptance of the role marginalized agency had played up to this point: Kinloch had been thwarted by a lack of local geographical knowledge. In its absence, local populations had been reluctant to support a European officer in the provision of either supplies, transport, labour, or information. Foxcroft likewise was refused permission to proceed as a result of his overt EIC attachment, and Kirkpatrick had relied on the intervention of local officials to secure food. It was evident that an EIC official could not reach Nepal without the co-operation of the local. There is no reason a Bengali would fare any better in unfamiliar and challenging

territory such as the Tarai and Himalayas, yet the difficulties inherent within a European-Nepalese encounter could be eliminated, and with greater mastery of local cultures, religion and languages, a Bengali envoy would be better placed to secure the support of the local.

There were plenty of candidates. Informants and diplomats previously in the employment of Mughal elites, resident in Bengal and hence keenly aware of British power, had already played a crucial role in the subsequent territorial expansion of the Company throughout north India by this time.¹⁴⁸ Christopher Bayly argued that there was a pattern to these Indian ambassadors, emphasising in particular a lineage of ambassadorial Mughal elite service, as well as family patronage of both the sacred, in holy centres, as well as the profane, with learned reputations. The decline in service offered by the Mughal rulers meant these ambassadors increasingly offered their services elsewhere.¹⁴⁹ This was particularly so in Bengal after the demise of the Nawabs there.

Over the years, Kadir Khan had manoeuvred himself into a position of trust, responsibility and reward for service rendered, to the point that he stood out above other potential emissaries for this expedition. He was the son of Mir Wasil Ali Khan, a servant to Mir Kasim. He rose to prominence as a judge of the Banaras Civil Court, and as an information collector for the British. He had experience in an intermediary capacity with Hindu states through his relationship with Amrit Rao, brother to the Maratha Peshwa, and had very likely accompanied his mentor Ali Ibrahim on diplomatic missions.¹⁵⁰ He was furthermore related to Mahomed Reza Khan, the most important Indian administrator during Clive's governance whose family was to inform British policy in Bengal from 1756 to 1830.¹⁵¹ Mahomed Reza Khan had an uneasy relationship with Hastings, helping explain why these prominent Indian ambassadors in Bengal were not entrusted with a mission to Nepal anytime sooner than John Shore's Governor-Generalship.

The most immediate advantage that Kadir Khan offered as an emissary is one previously alluded to: that this was a journey he had made several times already. It is evident within both Kirkpatrick's correspondence and his *Account* that it was Kadir Khan who recommended the EIC send an expedition in the first place, and that it was Kadir Khan who delivered Cornwallis' messages to Nepal. He had furthermore helped draught the earlier treaty between the EIC and Nepal with Jonathan Duncan, resident at Benares, in

¹⁴⁸ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.50.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.79.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.82.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.79.

the year preceding the expedition.¹⁵² By acting as an envoy, he was a voice in the ear to both Cornwallis and Bahadur Shah the Nepalese regent, as the Chinese armies approached.

An intriguing story emerges from Nepalese histories further exploring the role of Kadir Khan and that of Lama Shamarpa, a Tibetan exile in Kathmandu who supposedly encouraged the regent Bahadur Shah to invade Tibet in 1788.¹⁵³ Kadir Khan allegedly wrote to Duncan on the eve of the Chinese counter-invasion, explaining that the presence of that Tibetan exile in Nepal and the consequent Chinese demand for his return was a result of his brother, the former Panchen Lama, being poisoned due to his negotiations with the British (this was the same individual whom George Bogle had struck up a friendship with, two decades earlier.) The Panchen Lama had in fact died from smallpox and the alternative story of poison has been explained as a fabrication of Kadir Khan, keen to attribute blame for the Chinese invasion on the British, and thus secure British support for Nepal.¹⁵⁴ There is no evidence for this within the EIC's letters on the expedition, though they may not all be extant and if this story was indeed related by Kadir Khan to the British it would suggest a great degree of creativity on behalf of the Bengali emissary.

Kadir Khan's appointment represented a significant change in EIC Himalayan expedition policy wherein they built upon experience, and not of a military kind. Yet, even beyond the employment of a South Asian intermediary into a Company position of responsibility and negotiation, there were features of the 1795 Kadir Khan expedition that emphasize the importance of marginalized agency, both in determining the fate of previous ventures and within Kadir Khan's venture. For a start, the EIC recognized that an entourage considerably smaller in size and less militant would be more likely to secure support en route.¹⁵⁵ Once more, intermediaries travelling between Calcutta and Kathmandu before the expedition played an important role – whilst Kadir Khan himself could be considered marginalized within existing historical accounts, it was the Hindu mendicant, Guru Gajraj Misra, who made the preliminary voyage to Nepal (as Kadir Khan did for Kirkpatrick), convincing the now reigning Rana Bahadur Shah of the EIC's friendly intentions sufficiently enough to secure Kadir Khan an invite.¹⁵⁶ By this time, Misra's stock had risen greatly in Calcutta, Shore writing that 'the only channel through which I can hope to make a favourable impression on the Rajah of Nipaul is a brahmin by the name of Gurjraje Misser, who has always been disposed to promote our wishes, and whom Captain

¹⁵² Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, p.xi.

¹⁵³ Kunwar, 'China and War in the Himalayas', p.288.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.292.

¹⁵⁵ National Archives of India, (hereafter N.A.I) Political Consultation 10th November 1794, No.29.

¹⁵⁶ N.A.I. Political Consultation, 1st May 1795, No.7.

Kirkpatrick found possessed of great influence with the court of Nipaul.¹⁵⁷ Misra managed to secure Kadir Khan permission to proceed against the odds - the majority of courtiers remained hostile towards a tying EIC commercial treaty.¹⁵⁸ Nor could Misra draw upon Kadir Khan's help at this stage: the Bengali ambassador was unwell for the majority of the planning and travelling, being struck down by illness in the Tarai.¹⁵⁹

Nepalese accounts argue that Kadir Khan made his entreaties on mercantile, economic grounds, coming to them 'in the form of a merchant'.¹⁶⁰ The expedition was marginally more successful than that of Kirkpatrick: whilst it did not establish a residency or enforce the failing commercial treaty, the conversations held between Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan and Rana Bahadur Shah have been said to have improved EIC-Nepalese relations nonetheless. It is cited as a forerunner for Nepalese support in opposing the rebellion of Wazir Ali, a claimant to the Nawab of Oudh, as well as Nepalese co-operation in his capture.¹⁶¹ Khan's experience in Nepal greatly advanced his own career. He wrote extensively on the region, augmenting his knowledge of Indian diplomacy. In particular his reports on the Tarai region was highly valued for explaining the migrations of herdsmen in the region. He later served in the Lucknow residency, and was amply rewarded for his service to the EIC with a land grant in Benares.¹⁶²

V:8 Conclusions

Despite EIC efforts to move beyond the events of 1767, the spectre of Kinloch's enterprise, even the spectre of marginalized agency within that encounter, haunt the expeditions that followed. The significance of marginalized historical agents in those later expeditions demonstrates that 1767 was not a unique convergence of factors, but actually established a longer pattern of EIC-Nepalese relations and contact throughout the rest of the century.

In terms of the representation of Nepal that participants returned to the EIC, existing expectations remained steadfast; an orientalised, despotic, backward mountain fiefdom stubborn to the benefits of EIC trade. For James Logan this reflected the serious trauma of defeat and injury. In Kirkpatrick's case, the re-entrenchment of such views reflects the changing political dynamics at the point of his *Account's* publication as the

¹⁵⁷ *Minute by Governor General Shore dated November 10th, 1794.*, in B.L. IOR/P/BEN/SEC/30: Bengal Proceedings (Secret) (14 Jul 1794-29 Dec 1794).

¹⁵⁸ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.5.

¹⁵⁹ Rose, *Nepal*, p.76.

¹⁶⁰ Manandhar, 'British Residents', p.6.

¹⁶¹ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.5.

¹⁶² Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.83.

Company teetered on the brink of the Anglo-Nepalese War. However, lessons learned are evident within numerous EIC approaches: their plans for a second invasion, Logan's mission and the designs for Morang in 1774. There are furthermore competing agencies and influences within the Foxcroft and Kirkpatrick encounters, mostly present in differences within the Nepalese court, as they processed the fortunes of war and peace with China. The fates of expeditions were carefully orchestrated by other hands, and the values that the EIC commanders brought back were augmented by those manoeuvres. The parameters of Foxcroft and Kirkpatrick's encounters, who they met and where they went, were determined by marginalized parties.

The EIC ultimately found this period in Anglo-Nepalese relations a frustrating one. However, Kadir Khan's story demonstrates ways in which from 1767 to 1795, local, sometimes subaltern yet always marginalized individuals could progressively pursue their agendas either within an EIC expedition or upon encountering one. This often met with great success and reward, whilst the majority of these ventures failed to achieve their goals.

Chapter VI –Marginalized Agency in Wider Himalayan Ventures and Early Nineteenth-Century Expeditions to Nepal

Summary

Chapter VI continues the project of chapter V in charting the impact of 1767 and the influence of marginalized historical agents within colonial encounters. However, it casts a wider net in space and time. None of the expeditions discussed so far took place in a vacuum of Anglo-Nepalese relations. The web of competing British, Bengali, Nepalese, Tibetan, and Chinese interests that played a part in Kirkpatrick's 1793 expedition demonstrates this. Nor did Nepal represent the EIC's only point of contact with the Himalayan states and peoples. The chapter therefore first considers encounters contemporary to Kinloch but further afield geographically: in the Tarai lowlands, Bhutan, and Tibet. The chapter then focuses on later expeditions to Nepal: the residency in Kathmandu of William Knox, the subsequent published *Account of Nepaul* by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, and the Anglo-Nepalese War in the early nineteenth century. These later expeditions demonstrate the significance of marginalized agency within EIC-Nepalese encounters, and consequences of that agency, over a longer period of time.

VI:1 – The Sannyasi Uprising and Rennell's Cartography

The *Fakir* and Sannyasi Uprising took place between the EIC territories and the Himalayan foothills, spanning most of the late eighteenth century. Whilst the British interpretation at the time and that of colonial era historians consider it banditry taking greater opportunity in the aftermath of the Bengal Famine, Indian nationalist historians consider it a precursor to the independence struggle, rooting all grievances in the seismic changes from 1765. Marxist historians more recently emphasize underpinning economic hardships that tied *fakir* and Sannyasi together, considering the conflict a 'Peasant War'. Jon Wilson further identified these binary interpretations in the works of James Scott, who 'suggests that instances of violent rebellion are only the most emphatic expression of a 'hidden transcript' of resistance that reflected the peasant's permanent opposition to and exclusion from the structure of authority'.¹ These interpretations argue for an 'irreconcilable antagonism between fundamentally opposed social forces,' that 'does not provide room for an analysis of how the perception of those antagonisms emerged, nor of how subject-positions that

¹ Wilson, 'A Thousand Countries', p.84.

regarded themselves as necessarily opposed emerged'.² This section revises James Rennell's attempts to map the Himalayan foothills in the context of this uprising, demonstrating ways in which marginalized historical agents influenced European cartographical practices at this time. That revision furthermore counters existing partisan accounts of the uprising by demonstrating the hybridism of this conflict. The nuances of communal or individual grievances and interests help explain the emergence of those opposing subject-positions.

The *fakir* and Sannyasi groups straddled India and Nepal, clashing politically with regional powers in both these spaces. Many of the Sannyasi sects' principle monasteries were within the Himalayas, for instance that of the Giri sect at Joshimath, (Jyotirmath in present day Uttarakhand) a group that played a prominent role in the rebellion.³ Their trading interests spanned Awadh, Bengal and Nepal, whilst their pilgrimage routes criss-crossed the Tarai and the lower foothills.

In their encounter with the emergent Gorkhali state, the Sannyasis were aggravated by Prithvi Narayan Shah's re-invigorated taxation system that neglected their tax privileges, as he sought to finance his campaigns. Their avoidance of these new duties drew ire from the Nepalese Durbar. The Sannyasis consequently did not support Prithvi Narayan Shah, and hoped that the re-instating or resistance of regional hill-rajahs might better protect their religious privileges. Shah reportedly encountered the Sannyasis in his youth. Upon an earlier visit to Benares, the young prince had argued with and killed two Mughal customs officers. He was sheltered, concealed and then conducted to safety by a Sannyasi who in return was promised repayment upon the conquest of Nepal. Years later upon hearing of Shah's ascension to the throne, the Sannyasi 'repaired to that country and reminded the chief of his promises'. Shah acknowledged the validity of the story but refused to reward the Sannyasi on the grounds that the promise had 'been extorted through fear'. The affair soon escalated when the aggrieved mendicant 'assembled five hundred of the religious order' of Sannyasis against the Gorkhalis, causing further unrest along the border between Shah's new territories and British Bengal.⁴ This Sannyasi pressure moved Shah to a more conciliatory stance with the EIC: the Nepalese Durbar wrote to Warren Hastings in May 1773, expressing his anxiety to cultivate peace in order to counter the insurgency.⁵

² Ibid., p.109.

³ Suranjan Chatterjee, 'New Reflections on the Sannyasi, Fakir and Peasants War', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19:4 (January, 1984) p.3.

⁴ This story was related to Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, and appears in his *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.230.

⁵ Amatya, 'British Diplomacy', p.3.

There were also violent and sporadic clashes between Sannyasis and the EIC as early as the 1760s. The Sannyasis depended heavily on trade networks, notably silk, as well as money-lending. The EIC increasingly attempted to profit from these networks by raising dues on transactions with raw product cultivators and creating monopolies. In return, the Sannyasis resorted more often to smuggling.⁶ Many of the earlier clashes thus derived from the pursuit of smugglers. A further financial pressure on the Sannyasis in the years preceding the Permanent Settlement of 1790 was the increasing tax on lands previously exempted, and their ranks were indeed reinforced by peasant *ryots* unable to keep up with the demands of zamindars and Company collectors.⁷

Sannyasis and *fakirs* were aggrieved by the company restrictions on their movements and shrine worship. Following the upheaval of 1757 and 1764, the *fakirs* travelled far more frequently in larger groups for security, something the EIC considered alarming and sought to prohibit in their territory from 1773 onwards. These measures were not designed as an attack on religious practices, instead being motivated by paranoia over stability and a quest for legitimacy in the eyes of the zamindars whose estates were plundered. They nevertheless represented an intrusion into established religious practices – rights of mobility, arms, and exemption from duties were intrinsically linked to the Sannyasi ‘holy man’ status.⁸ It was also a prohibition on political, commercial rights: Sannyasis like *ryots* could relocate their labour through their nomadism. The notion that these subjects alternatively had ‘a thousand countries to go to,’ were they not provided justice by the British, was similarly apt for the itinerant Sannyasis.⁹ Attempts to prohibit their movements therefore deprived them of this advantage in their negotiations with landholders and local elite.

It was this prolonged, sporadic conflict that provided the backdrop for the next EIC venture through which marginalized agency and influence can be assessed: the Himalayan foothills section of the geographical survey of Bengal, under the direction of James Rennell. This enterprise was instructed by Clive in the mid-1760s. Before then, geographical knowledge derived mostly from smaller maps, drawing upon information of French, Indian, and Dutch reports, rather than the work of EIC surveyors. Clive planned to connect these various attempts, iron out the differences within them, and create a single map of EIC territorial acquisitions – for the multiple purposes of scientific enquiry,

⁶ Chatterjee, ‘New Reflections’, p.5.

⁷ Ibid., p.4.

⁸ Ibid., pp.4-6.

⁹ *Petition of Ryots of Cargeehat, Futtypore & ca.*, in Wilson, ‘A Thousand Countries’, p.85.

revenue and taxation, military control and administration. James Rennell had previously surveyed for the navy, had already begun surveying vast swathes of Bengal, and was twenty-four when appointed by Clive in 1767 to complete a general survey of EIC acquisitions.¹⁰ This drew him to the Himalayan foothills, a region for which EIC knowledge was, as previously outlined in chapter III, desperately inadequate. Writing to his former guardian in England on 25th September 1767, Rennell described the venture that lay ahead of him: 'I am now going to traverse the countries that lie east and southeast side of the Brahmaputrey, you may not expect to hear from me until this time again twelvemonth, as the length of the expedition will take up near that time. No country in the world perhaps is less known to Europeans than the countries lying between China and Indostan, and indeed how should it be otherwise, as the company have made very few discoveries until within twenty years past.'¹¹

Rennell's encounters with the Himalayan landscapes and the rebelling Sannyasis are rich in source material: he wrote extensively, both formally to various patrons and governors, and informally to friends and family in Britain, notably to members of the Burrington family with whom he grew up.¹² In addition, Rennell published the *Bengal Atlas* in 1779, as well as his *Memoirs of a Map of Hindoostan* in 1783. His field journals were also published in time.¹³ His encounter provides an important opportunity for the study of marginalized agency, playing a critical role in Rennell's representation of the Himalayas to the EIC and eighteenth-century Britain.

Firstly, his experience of the Himalayas and the Sannyasis left him physically and emotionally scarred by trauma. This can undoubtedly be read in his writing on the Himalayan foothills and augments colonialist notions of hostile, savage peripheries. Such a perception pre-dated his encounter with the Himalayas. He wrote on 31st August 1765 before proceeding up the Brahmaputra that he expected to meet 'a number of barbarous nations to pass through, some of them extremely jealous of Europeans'.¹⁴ However, a violent event within near the confluence of the Tista and Brahmaputra rivers affected him for life. In February 1766, Rennell was in the rear-guard of a military detachment chasing a cohort of what he called *fakirs*. In their flight they stumbled upon Rennell and a skirmish

¹⁰ G.F. Heaney, 'Rennell and the Surveyors of India', *The Geographical Journal*, 134:3 (September, 1968), p.318.

¹¹ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, p.174.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The versions drawn upon are James Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, or the Mogul's Empire*, (London: The Author, 1783) & James Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell, First Surveyor General of India, written for the information of the governors of Bengal during his surveys of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers 1764 to 1767* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910).

¹⁴ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, p.145.

ensued, of which Rennell wrote: 'I had the misfortune to be surrounded by the enemy, & received several cuts from their broad swords, one of which threatened my death.' He was seriously wounded and carried back to Dacca.¹⁵ Within his correspondence to his friends he provided further gruesome detail: 'one of them [his arms] was cut in three places, and the shoulder belonging to the other divided. One stroke of a sabre had cut my right shoulder bone through, and laid me open for nearly a foot down the back, cutting through or wounding several of the ribs. At the left elbow the muscular part was taken off by the breadth of a hand; I had besides a stab in the same arm and a large cut hand which has deprived me of the use of my forefinger. I had some other scratches, and found a large cut across the back of my coat.'¹⁶

The significance of this for the purpose of this study is twofold. It firstly secured Rennell's violent representation of the Himalayan foothills, demonstrating how personal experience and isolated incidence could reinforce and disseminate notions of oriental barbarity – Rennell's letters, journals and memoirs would have received a wide and varied audience. Secondly, it explains a reluctance to proceed into that space without a sizeable military guard, and an enthusiasm to do so for purposes of retaliation, Rennell writing on the event 'I have owed them a drubbing ever since'.¹⁷ Over a year later on 25th September 1767 he lamented 'the accident that befell me on the banks of the Brahmaputrey in February 1766 seems to have hurt my constitution beyond the possibility of remedy in this country'.¹⁸ Rennell would subsequently be followed by James Logan, in returning to the foothills to exact revenge after sustaining an injury (outlined in chapter V.)

Rennell's correspondence also sheds light on the subaltern role within the *Fakir* and Sannyasi Uprising. This cuts across more rigid definitions, such as the large-scale banditry of colonialist historians or the peasant uprising of the marxists, and instead demonstrates a more hybrid, multi-faceted uprising across different social groups for different reasons, drawn together or apart circumstantially, within and across localities.

The social structure of the Sannyasis lends itself to mass subaltern agency. Slight deviations in practice notwithstanding, each group was known as a *math*, led by a *mahant* who was voted in as head by *gurus*. There was no superordinate *Mahant* with authority over others. *Chelas* were disciples, recruited by the *gurus*.¹⁹ Everyone within the *Math* had some significance – the *mahant* was the spiritual leader, the *gurus* had great freedom to recruit, and

¹⁵ Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell*, p.74.

¹⁶ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, p.163.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.220.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.173.

¹⁹ Chatterjee, 'New Reflections', p.3.

the *chelas* were given responsibility to conduct trade, being advanced great sums of money to do so.²⁰ All positions within the *math* therefore had opportunity to act independently, and be involved in some form of decision making. Though the Sannyasis and *fakirs* maintained religious privileges and pursuits, by the eighteenth century they had become prominent moneylenders, traders and landholders. For Suranjan Chatterjee, this was the horizontal connection between different sects – bonds of trade.²¹

The multi-faceted nature of the Sannyasis' grievances led to some overlap, and some friction, with those of the wider Bengali population. For instance, it has been assumed by marxist and colonialists alike that the Sannyasis' activities and rent-free land drew resentment from the zamindari elite - indeed there were Sannyasi and *fakir* attacks on zamindar estates.²² Yet there was also cause for zamindar solidarity with the rebellious sects – Sannyasi proximity to a zamindar and the latter's patronage could cement their power and status within a community, whilst the armed *chelas* could bolster that zamindari's private army.²³ Even for smaller cultivators, holy men held a paradoxical position; being revered religiously yet begrudged for their customs avoidance by those burdened the most by EIC taxation.²⁴ Whether to support the Sannyasis was thus a circumstantial decision, evaluating these competing grudges or benefits. That loyalty could shift. For example, in the aftermath of the Rangpur Uprising of 1783, whilst some peasants involved joined the Sannyasis, others returned to cultivation.²⁵

An alliance between Sannyasi and landowner precipitated Rennell's injury in 1766 – the surveyor struggled to hire local *coolies* and porters, writing that he 'was not able to procure a single one, although I offered a sufficient price'. He likewise found the 'country people' refused to supply him and his entourage with provisions. Upon enquiry, Rennell discovered it was 'all owing to the villainy of the Dewan of Olyapour [Ulipur] who had threatened to punish any person who should supply me with men or provisions'. On January 11th, 'under a thick cover of fog', he proceeded to the *divan*'s house with a detachment of sepoy, only to find he had 'got intelligence of our march and was gone before we entered the house'. Rennell threatened the servants who remained to reveal the landowner's location, or he would set fire to the house, 'which was done accordingly soon after'. He then set fire to the house, and moved away a distance.²⁶ Shortly after, the fire was

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p.3 & p.9.

²³ Ibid., p.3.

²⁴ Ibid., p.4.

²⁵ Wilson, 'A Thousand Countries', p.101.

²⁶ Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell*, pp.61-62. The *divan* of Olipur did not hold the same status as the Mughal office of the *divan* of Bengal.

extinguished and the *divan* came in pursuit, supported by around 450 private soldiers, villagers and *fakirs* by Rennell's estimation, acting together against the EIC expedition's presence in the region.

There is further evidence within Rennell's journal of the Sanyasis and *fakirs* working alongside local populations and unnamed historical agents. His concession that the Sannyasis had detachments in different villages reporting on his movements supports Chatterjee's argument that local peasants were informing the Sannyasis on the transmission of sums of money, or sepoys on the march.²⁷ Rennell reinforced the notion that, having completed their plunder, the Sannyasis then moved to a neighbouring district and shared that collection with their collaborators.²⁸ It was this local support, and these guerrilla tactics, that so thwarted the EIC and prolonged the conflict – in spite of the deployment of four battalions of the Company's forces, officials were forced to concede that revenue could not be collected safely, that 'the inhabitants made communion with the marauders and the whole rural administration was unhinged'.²⁹

Marginalized agency played a critical part in the surveying process itself, since Bengali intermediaries were integral to the project. Large-scale survey operations drew heavily on Bengali labour: the support of guides, messengers, porters, for logistical support. For example, it was through the *barkaras* that Rennell remitted the maps and portions of the journal written so far to Calcutta.³⁰ They also drew upon Indian knowledge. Rennell was amongst the earliest EIC surveyors to use their own observation and field work rather than existing reports, but he did not do so exclusively: he relied on local geographical instruction and though he certainly conducted many of the Brahmaputra and Ganges Delta surveys personally, he also drew upon the route marches of soldiers and surveyors, British and Indian, particularly after the injuries sustained in 1766.³¹ He provided a rare acknowledgement of his comparatively marginalized South Asian informants for regions in which he did not travel personally. He singled out an unnamed 'Sepoy Officer,' presumably that which led the military detachment he was accompanied by after 1766. There are then a number of Indian surveyors credited – 'Ghulam Muhammad, for the rocks and country

²⁷ Ibid., p.73. & Chatterjee, 'New Reflections', p.9.

²⁸ B.L. IOR/H/765 Letters of Major James Rennell, p.220.

²⁹ Chatterjee, 'New Reflections', p.8.

³⁰ It is hard to ascertain how regularly this service was rendered since Rennell did not record every instance in which he remitted his work - acknowledgements such as that of the 10th June 1764 wherein he wrote that he had 'despatched a hirkar with the maps and journal' were infrequent. Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell*, p.16.

³¹ Kapil Raj, 'Circulation and the Emergence of Modern Mapping: Great Britain and Early Colonial India, 1764-1820', in Claude Markovits, Jacques Poucheпадass & Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia 1750-1950* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), p.76.

between Bengal and the Deccan', Mirza Mughal Beg for north-western India,' and a Brahmin Indian called Sadanand, a man of 'uncommon genius and knowledge,' for Gujarat.³²

Like Kinloch and Kirkpatrick, Rennell was critical of South Asian information. He validated it against his own experiences, for example in June 1764 he felt obliged to 'proceed father up [a creek] to get better intelligence'.³³ In other instances he rejected or challenged that information.³⁴ These checks were not just the meticulousness of a young and enthusiastic officer or the belief in European scientific observation. They demonstrate a suspicion around the intent and effectiveness of these marginalized historical agents providing logistical support or knowledge – just as it helped, it could also hinder. For every instance in which Rennell does obtain information, there is one wherein his requests for detail fail, and he is obliged to write that he 'could not learn from the country people any particulars'.³⁵ Whilst some co-operated, others did not. On occasion, non-co-operation was more subtle than armed resistance. Similar to the villagers of Janakpur in 1767, Rennell encountered avoidance: 'I had some thoughts of proceeding as far as Catchubary, in order to take a view of the country, as well as to be informed of the situation of the fir forests, but finding the natives very averse to it, and that they withdrew into the country in order that we should not be able to procure provisions, I judged it prudent to desist without further orders, as being foreign to the service now in execution.'³⁶ Rennell likewise suffered from desertions by porters, as Kinloch had before him.³⁷

These challenges account for a degree of sensitivity within Rennell's journals and instructions towards how local populations may react to his surveying, suggesting that their agendas and action could indeed scupper the enterprise, should they be unhappy. For example, he was ordered on 5th April 1765 to conduct his survey of rivers with sensitivity to local interests, notably the Brahmaputra 'as high as it can be done without offending the natives'.³⁸

Marginalized historical agents thus had agency with which they subverted and frustrated European surveying enterprises. However, their involvement was critical and

³² Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, pp.vi, 66, 69.

³³ Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell*, p.21.

³⁴ For example, 'About 9 miles from the first Sittarya we came to another river of the same name. The Hircaras informed me that it is the same river, but that is impossible as both the rivers ran to the right as we crossed them'. Ibid., p.90.

³⁵ Rennell, *The Journal of Major James Rennell*, p.46. 9th-16th June 1765.

³⁶ Ibid., p.60.

³⁷ At one point reflecting that 'he [the EIC Resident of Rangpur] sent me a considerable number [of porters] from Rangpur, but as they deserted on the road I received no more than 18.' Ibid., p.62.

³⁸ Ibid., p.42.

would continue, even develop, in the ventures of Rennell's successors. Thomas Call for instance wrote that he had 'for a year and a half past, employed 6 munshies [*Munshis*] and 30 Hurcarrows [*barkaras*] at my own expense, to travel through the different parts of India to collect information'.³⁹ These were often employed on the basis of previous services rendered, and the EIC invested in the instruction of Indians as surveyors in the years after Rennell, giving them greater responsibility to expand colonial knowledge.⁴⁰ Indian surveyor information was not merged with that of colonial officials seamlessly – it was always subject to the critical processes such as those of Rennell, just as Kinloch did with the information of his guides. Yet that contribution, and ability to direct expeditions and the extent of knowledge, initially evident in Rennell's experience, becomes colossal and crucial, particularly in the Himalayas, wherein surveying was undertaken by the *pundits* later in the nineteenth century.⁴¹

VI:2 'I Can Depend On His Exerting Himself For My Behalf': George Bogle in Bhutan and Tibet.

By the 1770s, the EIC still pursued the ultimate prize: open trade with Tibet, access to its lucrative silk and shawl markets, and overland access to China. However, the 1767 expedition had failed to secure trade routes through Nepal Valley and the Gorkhalis occupied significant passes at Kyirong, Kuti, Morang, and Sikkim. The Board of Directors therefore began to investigate alternative routes further afield, through Assam and Bhutan.⁴²

In similar circumstances to 1767 wherein Jaya Prakash Malla requested help, it was the intersection of this colonial agenda and Himalayan political intrigue and conflict that drew the EIC into Bhutan. In 1770 the Bhutanese *Druk Desi* Zhidar occupied territory in neighbouring Cooch Behar, sandwiched between Bhutan and EIC territory around Rangpur.⁴³ Zhidar seized the Cooch Behar raja and replaced him with his own factional

³⁹ B.L. IOR/P/3/63 Bengal Public Consultations, 6 October 1783.

⁴⁰ Raj, 'Circulation and the Emergence of Modern Mapping', p.93.

⁴¹ See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (London: John Murray, 1990), and *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: The Race for Lhasa* (London: John Murray, 1982).

⁴² S.C. Sarkar, 'Some Notes on the Intercourse of Bengal with the Northern Countries in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Bengal Past and Present*, XLI (1932), p.121.

⁴³ In eighteenth-century Bhutan there were three religious authorities of the dominant *Drukpa* Buddhist order titled the *Dharma Rajas*: the verbal, physical and mental reincarnations of the original *Drukpa Shabdrung*, the individual founder of that order. These *Dharma Rajas* delegated civil authority to the *Druk Desi*, meaning 'Thunder Dragon Regent,' often known in colonial sources as the *Deb Raja*. Michael Aris, ed., *Views of Medieval Bhutan: The Diary and Drawings of Samuel Davis, 1783* (London: Serindia Publications, 1982), p.12.

candidate. In 1772 that puppet-ruler, Rajendra Narayan, died of fever and Zhidar's envoy was ousted from the region. The Bhutanese then invaded with great force. The newly installed raja of Cooch Behar Dharendra Narayan was overrun, and called upon the EIC for assistance. Sensing the opportunity to establish influence over an alternative route to Tibet, a Company expedition led by John Jones set out from Rangpur.⁴⁴

This was the first military intervention in the foothills after 1767. There is no extant expeditionary journal for this encounter within the archives, although there are summary accounts by Samuel Turner and John Stewart.⁴⁵ It was potentially the subject of the *Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country*, which although in Hastings' personal collection, could have predated his rule. That uncertainty notwithstanding, there are some notable differences in strategy, and similarities in marginalized factors of opposition, between previous expeditions and the Cooch Behar intervention. Firstly, the Company initially rejected Cooch Behar's terms that they reimburse the EIC with one lakh rupees. Given the uncertain, often spiralling costs of war, the Company instead insisted payment through annual revenue and diplomatic agreement, effectively annexing the state. Secondly, the 1772 military venture did not risk heavy losses in an immediate assault on Bhutanese fortifications, like Kinloch had at Sindhuli. Instead, Jones paused, writing to the Bhutanese and requesting their withdrawal, allowing for Cooch Behar reinforcements to arrive in support. Jones did not engage the sepoys until facing the Bhutanese on more open ground at Chichacotta in which the expedition's artillery could be deployed. Summarizing the encounter, John Stewart wrote in 1777 that although 'fierce in their assault...the management of artillery and incessant fire of musketry was beyond any idea which they could have conceived'.⁴⁶ Writing in 1783, Samuel Turner similarly commended the bravery of the Bhutanese, but added that 'it was impossible that they could content long against the superior advantage of firelocks and cannon'.⁴⁷ Historian A. Deb added, 'Shidariva [Zhidar] had not grasped the significance of the cannonade at Plassey'.⁴⁸ The depleted Bhutanese were ousted from Cooch Behar. Zimpe, Zhidar's commander and nephew, was killed, and Dharendra Narayan was reinstated. The EIC could have pressed home their advantage at this point. However, the expedition then encountered familiar troubles: many of the

Zhidar, the *Druk Desi* from 1768 to 1773, is sometimes alternatively spelt *Shidariva*. A. Deb, 'Cooch Behar and Bhutan in the Context of Tibetan Trade', *Kailash*, 1:1 (1973) p.82.

⁴⁴ Deb, 'Cooch Behar', p.82.

⁴⁵ Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Tesboo Lama in Tibet* (London: W. Bulmer & Co. 1800) & John Stewart, 'An Account of the Kingdom of Tibet, in a letter to Sir John Pringle', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 67 (1777), 465–492.

⁴⁶ Stewart, 'An Account', p.467.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁴⁸ Deb, 'Cooch Behar', p.82.

column fell sick and died in the Tarai, including Jones.⁴⁹ Company soldiers once more faced an alliance of Sannyasis and local elites – in the closing stages a great number came to support Zhidar, preventing further progress into the foothills.⁵⁰

At that stage, another regional power received entreaties. Zhidar upon struggling against the EIC sepoy called upon the mediation of Lobsang Palden Yeshe, the Panchen Lama and one of two political and religious figures of authority in Tibet.⁵¹ The Panchen Lama wrote to Governor-General Warren Hastings on Zhidar's behalf, stating that although the *Druk Desi* had 'committed ravages and other outrages on your frontiers', he was 'of a rude and ignorant race', and had 'met with the punishment he deserved'. The Panchen Lama took it upon himself 'to be his mediator', since 'the charge and administration of the country, for the present, is committed to me'. He requested that 'you will cease from all hostilities against him [Zhidar], and in doing this, you will confer the greatest favour and friendship upon me'.⁵² By this time the conflict was concluded and Cooch Behar had become a de-facto tributary state of the EIC. That dialogue had nevertheless begun and a brief exchange of letters was enough to convince Hastings that a diplomatic mission would be welcomed into Tibet.

George Bogle was selected as envoy. He was certainly a gifted administrator, yet his appointment can also be accounted for by a network of patronage, the same Lowland Scottish clique of Kinloch. Bogle worked in close proximity to Hastings after letters of introduction. Alexander Hamilton who accompanied him as surgeon was likewise a family friend. They would depart from Calcutta, travel through Bhutan to the Panchen Lama's residence in Tibet, using a Jesuit map provided by Hastings.⁵³ Primarily, they were sent as a guarantee of peace, and as an opportunity to establish a trade dialogue. Yet Bogle was also instructed by Hastings to meticulously observe flora and fauna, people and places.⁵⁴ This was both orientalist curiosity and military espionage. In fact, at roughly the same time as Bogle's mission, James Logan in Nepal was feigning friendliness on the one hand, drawing plans for war on the other. Military force was always a veiled threat and plausible protocol. Bogle was no exception, as per Hastings' instructions for him to resort to such a suggestion

⁴⁹ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.21.

⁵⁰ Deb, 'Cooch Behar', p.82.

⁵¹ The other within the Gelugpa Order of Buddhism being the Dalai Lama. Usually the older of the two would mentor the other during their infancy, however at times wherein both had reached their majority, or when one feared the influence of the other's regent, or Chinese ambassadors, the relationship between the two different spiritual leaders could become fraught and competitive.

⁵² *Translation of a letter from Tesboo Lama to Warren Hastings, received 29th March 1774*, in Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.21.

⁵³ Kate Teltscher, *The High Road to China: George Bogle, the Panchen Lama, and the First British Expedition to Tibet* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p.24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.34.

if needs be. Therefore, whilst making overtures of peace Bogle also wrote a tract, *Observations made on the proper mode of attacking Bhutan*, for Hastings.⁵⁵

In contrast to the 1767 expedition, there are many primary sources available for the study of George Bogle's journey. Like Kinloch he was instructed to keep a journal, which he did diligently. Bogle's process of recording field notes has been described as such:

On his arrival in Bhutan, he took a large sheet of paper, and folded into twelve – 'duodecimo size' to fit into his pocket. He jotted down notes as he went. When one page was full, he would unfold the paper to go on to the next. Sometimes the pencil would break, and he would have to wait for the next resting place to sharpen it, then try to recall the details of what had passed. As he progressed, the notes extended to cover the whole sheet; but with the frequent opening and unfolding, the constant rubbing in his pocket against crumbs of bread and seeds of trees, the script grew faded and in parts illegible. It was only later that he would attempt to reconstruct the narrative in his ink-written journal.⁵⁶

The ink-written journal was copied and archived. This transition from hasty field notes to ink book written upon his return places distance between Bogle's narrative and the events he observed. However, Bogle's notes on this sheet of paper were not the only observations he made en route, and the narrative is augmented by its reading alongside the letters to his brother and sister, as well as those written by Hamilton. Bogle's correspondence also provides a fresh perspective, being written for a different audience. The tone of the letters to Bogle's siblings is more jovial and familiar. There also exists a version of Bogle's journal that was published for a much wider audience, though it was not composed during his own lifetime but considerably later in 1876.⁵⁷

Of the historical characters within this venture whose role could be considered marginalized, either within Bogle's entourage or encountering him en route, a particularly important agent was Bogle's guide, Puran Giri Gosain. Historian Kate Teltscher has previously drawn great attention to the role played by this individual, and his relationship with Bogle, so for that reason a brief summary of his contribution, its similarities and differences to that of Kinloch's guides, will suffice. A *gosain* of Jyotirmath in the Himalayan foothills, it was Puran Giri who delivered Lobsang Palden Yeshé's letter to Hastings.⁵⁸ He was chosen to conduct Bogle and Hamilton back into the mountains, and in that respect

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.82-3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.49.

⁵⁷ Markham, ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle*. Markham's marginalia appears in the India Office Records editions.

⁵⁸ Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.14. Puran Giri Gosain was known to Bogle as Purangir.

played a very similar role to those of Muktananda and Ram Das in 1767. However, Bogle entrusted Puran Giri with his business, investing him with responsibilities of negotiation, ('I think I can depend on his exerting himself for my behalf,') and relying on him to explain and interpret the world around him.⁵⁹ Bogle's confidence in Puran Giri would later be echoed in Shore's previously described confidence in Gajraj Misra after he had safely conducted Kirkpatrick to Nepal.⁶⁰ It was a relationship improved as Puran Giri performed, and the expedition progressed successfully. Kinloch's relationship with his guides on the other hand was one of suspicion over loyalty, questions over true conduct, reflecting the different circumstances under which their relationship operated - Kinloch travelled through hostile terrain, towards an imposing enemy – it was not in the best interests of his guide's safety that he progressed, and the prospects of reward diminished rather than developed. Considered comparatively, both examples of success and failure demonstrate how critical that relationship between guide and guided could be.

The relationship between the Panchen Lama in Tibet and the new *Druk Desi* that succeeded Zhidar in Bhutan was not without animosity. Different Buddhist orders held power in each state, the Gelugpa order presiding over the Panchen and Dalai Lamas in Tibet, the Drukpa School in Bhutan. By 1773, relations were tense: whilst the Gelugpa order were banned from establishing monasteries in Bhutan, the Panchen Lama offered shelter to the deposed Zhidar.⁶¹ The *Druk Desi* therefore had reasons to deter Bogle, whose enterprise could enrich Tibet and the fortunes of the former ruler. Likewise, the Panchen Lama was apprehensive of EIC agendas. He received particularly damning reports from emissaries to Chait Singh, the Raja of Benares, who painted a rapacious, expansionist portrait of the British, whilst the regent to the Dalai Lama also voiced his suspicion at the enterprise.⁶² Bogle himself speculated that it was due to the invasions of Bhutan and Nepal that the Panchen Lama was reluctant, and hoped to present the British as passive, defensive and commercially orientated.⁶³ Both of these characters were swayed however, by the entreaties of Puran Giri. Moreover, the *gosain* personally told the Qianlong Emperor of Hastings, Bengal, and the EIC, when he made a second journey overland to Beijing.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Quoted in Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.72 & pp.76-77.

⁶⁰ See chapter V.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.69.

⁶² Ibid., p.86.

⁶³ Ibid., p.71.

⁶⁴ It is from Puran Giri's own reports to Bogle and Hastings that the EIC came to know of this, and Teltscher does suggest his role within that could have been fabricated. Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.2.

Bogle and Hamilton were initially part of a large cohort including sixty-seven servants kitted out in matching uniforms.⁶⁵ They then recruited porters en route. Bogle's reflections on his servants and porters, the service performed and their willingness to do so, are mostly positive: "This is a service so well established, that the people submit to it without murmuring. Neither sex, nor age, exempts them from it... a girl of 18 travelled one day 15 or 18 miles with a burden of 70 or 75 pounds – we could hardly do it without any weight at all."⁶⁶ In subsequent ventures, Hamilton was notably more dismissive of their use. He remarked in his own correspondence that 'rousing *lascars* or *coolies* is here exceedingly difficult,' making his plea that some were sent from Bengal, 'for god's sake give the Burdwan coolies any money to come this length, I have been these four days, any luggage not yet arrived, greatly harrowed owing to the negligence of your *subedar* Rosham Khan who let half the *coolies* run away.'⁶⁷ Hamilton's letters provide greater detail unto the everyday delays that exasperated the two European travellers. On one occasion, Hamilton's progress to Tibet was paused for the recovery of a lost dog.⁶⁸ He was also stalled whilst *barkaras* took their time delivering messages to and from Calcutta. All the while, Hamilton lamented the lack of horses.⁶⁹

Within another passage we learn some further information about the terms and delivery of service that may help account for these difficulties:

The only means of transporting goods in this hilly country is by *coolies*... there are no particular clans of people who follow this profession; they are picked from among the inhabitants, receive an allowance for victuals at the pleasure of the people on whose service they are employed, and are relieved by others procured in the same manner at the next village, by order of the headman, without which not a *coolie* is to be had.⁷⁰

The porters therefore, whilst appearing to Bogle to take up this responsibility without complaint, were not paid directly and selected by the village authority. This inability to choose engagement in the contract undoubtedly opens up questions over loyalty and

⁶⁵ Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.22.

⁶⁶ Mss Eur E226/8 Version of Bogle's Journal Covering the Journey from Cooch Behar to Tashichodzong (unspecified), p.23.

⁶⁷ *Hamilton to Bogle*, 17th May 1775, 86(b), in Mss Eur E226/86 Copies of Letters from Alexander Hamilton (Unspecified).

⁶⁸ *Hamilton to Bogle*, 1775, 86(a), in Mss Eur E226/86 Copies of Letters from Alexander Hamilton (Unspecified).

⁶⁹ *Hamilton to Bogle*, 28th June 1775, 86(c) and 17th May 1775, 86(b), in Mss Eur E226/86 Copies of Letters from Alexander Hamilton (Unspecified).

⁷⁰ Mss Eur E226/8 Version of Bogle's Journal Covering the Journey from Cooch Behar to Tashichodzong (unspecified), p.23.

willingness – was this considered a community responsibility by those who took part, or a contract undertaken by the headman, enriching them rather than the wider village? That would certainly pivot on the avarice, or perception of avarice, of that local authority, and could vary from village to village. These relationships explain some of the difficulties Bogle had further into the Bhutanese foothills, wherein he had to frequently resort to coaxing, berating and tending to his staff.⁷¹ He believed this to be a combination of oriental laziness, and a result of Montesquieu's ideas of biological determinism – the notion that people born in the tropical climate were naturally slow moving, their constitution unsuited to strenuous work such as travel through the mountains. He said as much to John Stewart, writing 'Your Bengalees may do very well for plain ground but they are not for the ups and downs of this world'.⁷² After two months of service he dismissed them and the majority of the caravan, drawing on fewer porters. Although Kate Teltscher argued this was to avoid the suspicious gaze of Chinese representatives in Lhasa, it's also likely that he was tired of the delays they caused, as winter approached and he remained south of the Himalayas.⁷³

The Bhutanese population that Bogle encountered on the way also played a part by receiving him positively. Teltscher has suggested that Bogle's willingness to adapt to Bhutanese expectations, and adopt Bhutanese customs, down to the growing of a moustache, fostered successful relations with the local.⁷⁴ His willingness to learn Bhutanese certainly reduced the role of interpreters between himself and the people he met (although it meant some individuals occupied the important position of instructing him, and thus marginalized agency was not completely side-stepped as a result of his scholarship.) Yet Bogle's reception with the wider Bhutanese population, particularly those accommodating enough to shelter his entourage, was also rooted in the deep unpopularity of Zhidar, the former *Druk Desi* who taxed extortionately in order to fund the construction of a new palace, which is cited to have 'encouraged great discontent'.⁷⁵

Bogle found even after Puran Giri secured permission for him to proceed to Tibet, that he could not depart Tashichodzong where he stayed until the arrival there of the Bengali merchant Mirza Settar, who was progressing up from Rangpur with further supplies – resources that the new *Druk Desi* had not provided.⁷⁶ There was a further delay orchestrated by marginalized historical agents – a brief uprising led by supporters of the

⁷¹ Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.54.

⁷² MSS Eur 226/77(c) in Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.54.

⁷³ Ibid., p.49.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.56.

⁷⁵ Markham, ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle*, p.38.

⁷⁶ MSS Eur 226/77(c) in Teltscher, *The High Road*, p.87.

deposed Zhidar, who occupied Simtokha, the strategic *dzong* that dictated passage along all roads to and from Tashichodzung. Bogle could not guarantee how this faction of the wider Bhutanese population, loyal to the former *Druk Desi* who fought the British, would react to his mission. He remained locked in the capital until the rebellion was defeated by conscripts from local villages.⁷⁷

Bogle spent six months at Shigatse in Tibet, building an amiable relationship with Lobsang Palden Yeshé that is remarkable for its friendliness, openness and the curiosity of both parties. Bogle returned to Calcutta whilst Puran Giri proceeded to China, hoping to augment new commercial opportunities. The Qianlong Emperor by Puran Giri's own reports was engaged and interested in a Tibetan link to Bengal, however whilst in Beijing Lobsang Palden Yeshé became ill, dying in November, 1780. Bogle too passed away in 1781. Puran Giri benefitted greatly from the Bogle mission. He was permitted to establish the Bhot Bagan *math* near Howra in Bengal, with himself as *mabant*. The site also served as a de facto Tibetan embassy and residence for visiting Tibetan merchants and monks. Puran Giri continued in his role as an intermediary, developing Bhot Bagan into a significant monastery until his own death in 1795. EIC-Tibetan links waned after that, as relationships with China and Nepal worsened. Yet the EIC's courtship of Tibet, at times hindered but greatly facilitated by marginalized agency, had begun.

VI:3 'A Country of Mountains': Turner, Davis and the Romanticist's Lens

In 1782 Hastings received a letter from Lobsang Palden Yeshé's brother Shamarpa, informing him of the sixth Panchen Lama's death, and their reincarnation, Palden Tenpai Nyima, the seventh Panchen Lama. Shamarpa was regent at the time and hoped to strengthen his own position by cultivating stronger relations with the EIC, as both Qing China influence, and that of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa reaching his majority, increased. Hastings planned an expedition to cultivate such relations. Samuel Turner joined the EIC as a cadet in 1780 and by 1783 had risen to the rank of Lieutenant. His appointment as emissary represents a return to previous policies of military commanders in ambassadorial positions, reflecting the level of reconnaissance that they were expected to undertake, though this appointment was also one of patronage between Turner and Hastings – they were cousins. Turner set out with Samuel Davis and the surgeon Robert Saunders, travelling in palanquins. They were once more led by Puran Giri Gosain.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.88.

⁷⁸ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.3.

Upon his return to Calcutta, Turner presented the governor-general with ‘a hasty narrative of my interview with the young lama’. He had however, ‘carefully committed to writing upon my employment on this extraordinary service.’ Years later in 1800, he published his account of the journey and his time in Tibet, which was the first of its kind since Bogle’s journal was not yet made available to the public.⁷⁹ Within his introduction Turner emphasized his lack of credibility as a writer, yet wrote that ‘the novelty and curiosity of the subject will, in some degree, compensate for my own deficiencies’.⁸⁰ This text was re-packaged for the public years after the field notes were written, like that of Kirkpatrick. Turner described his surroundings in an emergent romanticist convention. He was in awe of nature – the serpentine, precipice roads, lofty, snowy peaks, vistas of monasteries topping crags and pine on the mountainside, the ‘finely romantic views with which we were delighted’.⁸¹ His writing is more artistic than previous accounts, for example his vivid description of the monsoon, ‘a torrent of the heaviest rain that descends with wonderful impetuosity.’⁸² This ‘endeavour to delineate the appearance of a region, little known, and to mark so much of the manners of the people’ occupies far more content than the progress of his diplomatic enterprise – the explorer wrote that he omitted ‘the repetition of all that passed relative to the business of my commission’ since ‘to attempt the recital here, would be entering into tiresome detail, widely deviating from my present design’.⁸³

The 1783 expedition was unprecedented in its inclusion of the romanticist artist and surveyor, Samuel Davis, who made a number of sketches of the Himalayas. Four appeared in Thomas Pennant’s *The View of Hindoostan* (1798) whilst nine featured in Turner’s *Account*. Six were engraved by his friend William Daniell in 1813, entitled *Views in Bootan, from the Drawings of Samuel Davis, Esq.*⁸⁴ More were published posthumously. There is no extant copy of his diary, though his son John Davis did read extracts to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1830.⁸⁵ Two further passages appeared in the *Oriental Annual* of 1837.⁸⁶ The surgeon Robert Saunders likewise contributed a scientific account of Bhutan and Tibet

⁷⁹ A full bibliographical summary can be found in Trevor Lipscombe, ‘The First British Book about Bhutan: A Publishing History of Turner’s Account of An Embassy’, *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, 35 (2016), 1-19.

⁸⁰ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.63.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.80.

⁸⁴ Michael Aris, ed., *Views of Medieval Bhutan: The Diary and Drawings of Samuel Davis*, p.36 & p.38.

⁸⁵ John Davis, ‘Remarks on the Religions and Social Institutions of the Bouteas, or Inhabitants of Boutan, from the Unpublished Journal of the Late Samuel Davis, Esq. F.R.S. &c’., *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, ii (1830), 491-517.

⁸⁶ Hobart Caunter, ‘Passages from the Manuscript Account of Boutan, in the Possession of the Asiatic Society’, *The Oriental Annual*, IV (1837), 52-4, 105-7.

from the point of view of their geology and botany, published in *Philosophical Transactions* LXXIX (1789).⁸⁷

Within Turner's account there is evidence of compromises and accommodations to avoid the same delays and circumstances, triggered by marginalized agency, that hindered previous expeditions. For example, Turner hoped to travel in a smaller party, acutely aware of the delays occasioned by a large entourage. On the borders of Bhutan, he met the *Druk Desi's* chaperone. He wrote: 'As they were encumbered with much baggage, and many attendants, to avoid the inconvenience of travelling with so large a party I persuaded them to go on before us.'⁸⁸ Despite these measures, marginalized agency continued to impede his itinerary. At one stage the travellers were detained overnight awaiting the better part of their baggage, which remained on the road from Rangpur. Upon its arrival, it became apparent that 'many of the *coolies*, or porters, had left us in the course of the night'.⁸⁹ Turner was reliant on the assistance of the *Druk Desi's* regional agents 'to supply the deficiency of the carriage, which, at every stage, occasioned us much perplexity and trouble'.⁹⁰

One agent in particular stalled Turner greatly, a regional *soubah* official who had not made adequate preparations with which to provision the expedition going forward. Turner wrote: 'I could not help expressing my disappointment at finding that no preparations had been made for my journey, after I had already passed so much time at Rungpore, [Rangpur] especially as I had conveyed intimation of my approach to the Daeb [the *Druk Desi*].'⁹¹ It is evident from the 'violent altercation' that Turner's chaperone had with this *soubah* that the delay was not instructed by their master. The *soubah* may genuinely have struggled preparing the labour and carriage. Alternatively, he deliberately stalled Turner in order to cultivate influence: their relationship soon turned very amicable, with excursions shooting, hill-trekking and boozy evenings playing cards.⁹²

The decisions made by marginalized historical agents eventually played a critical role, upon the arrival of a messenger from the regent Shamarpa and the Panchen Lama, with passports for two Europeans to travel onwards. Turner recorded that 'a long negotiation with him took place; and as he was little accustomed to foreign intercourse, it is extraordinary what absurdities and prejudices I had to combat'. In this instance, the EIC envoy negotiated unsuccessfully with a lowly *barkara*. The latter refused to allow all three

⁸⁷ Robert Saunders, 'Some Account of the Vegetable and Mineral Productions of Tibet and Bootan', *Philosophical Transactions*, LXXIX (1789).

⁸⁸ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp.29-39.

travellers to proceed, and Davis remained behind. Turner implied that it was Tibetan suspicion of the surveyor's skills that led to this refusal.⁹³ However, the Panchen Lama did not specifically name which Europeans would be permitted entry, only that their number was limited. The best efforts of Turner and Purnan Giri could not persuade the *barkara* otherwise. He refused to give way on the basis that Bogle had travelled only with a surgeon, fearing that he would be punished.⁹⁴ Due to this individual's obduracy the expedition's draughtsman, the very feature that made its composition extraordinary, proceeded no further than Tashichodzong.

Michael Aris claims it is not known how much longer Davis remained in Bhutan.⁹⁵ However his journal, being rich in detail on aspects of Bhutanese society covering many religious festivals, indicates that he did not return to Bengal promptly.⁹⁶ These observations read alongside Turner's account and Davis's drawings demonstrate to the reader the intersection between the representation of Bhutan that the EIC adventurers expected, that which they did observe, and how the Bhutanese hoped to be perceived. Davis's depiction of Bhutan and the Bhutanese contrasts sharply with those of Nepal in its non-violent depiction. His drawings were orderly and serene – neat temples and *dzongs* set to majestic mountain valley vistas. Even during a rebellion that he witnessed, Davis noted that the Bhutanese 'shewed [sic] a tenderness of each other's lives which, without scruple, I should have attributed to their want of courage, had they not given proof of the contrary in their war with us'.⁹⁷ Cooch Behar was by this time annexed. Bhutan had submitted to a peaceful treaty and trade from British Rangpur. There was no impetus to represent this Himalayan space as a hostile periphery. The Bhutanese however were keen to emphasize the authority of the *Druk Desi* over that of the *Dharma Rajas*. For that reason, Turner, Davis, and Saunders saw very little of the religious *Dharma Raja* figureheads. They were given much freedom over their movement – taking excursions unchaperoned during their four-month stay – yet they were kept away from the *Dharma Rajas* at the monastery of Cheri in an exhibition of the *Druk Desi*'s political supremacy.⁹⁸

Orientalist expectations convergent with deliberated Bhutanese representations of authority meant the travellers did not challenge this vision of the despotic. It has had a lasting, damaging influence on British colonial attitudes towards Bhutan. Davis's journal

⁹³ Aris, ed., *Views of Medieval Bhutan*, p.24.

⁹⁴ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.162.

⁹⁵ Aris, ed., *Views of Medieval Bhutan*, p.24.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.40-60.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.55.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.45.

contains what Michael Aris termed ‘a mild condescension, a natural ethnocentrism, yet one very far removed from the grossly racist response shown by many British in the East in the next two centuries’.⁹⁹ This endearing description was nevertheless a colonizing device that patronized Bhutanese society and expressed European superiority. The same ethos allowed Aris to deploy the word ‘medieval’ in his evocation of Bhutan without a consideration of its simple, feudal and backward connotation amongst European readers. Aris writes: ‘although the word is of course absent from Davis’s vocabulary – it was only invented in the nineteenth century – I have not hesitated to use it in the title of this book.’¹⁰⁰

Aris further asserted that ‘Davis’s legacy played no part in the development of those imaginary utopias which the West continues to locate in the trans-Himalayan region’.¹⁰¹ Turner’s writings and Davis’s drawings bear many hallmarks of European artistic convention and emergent orientalist representations suggesting to Aris that they were shaped by existing knowledge, rather than contributing to it significantly. However, what they encountered in Bhutan was something altogether surprising and original. Davis wrote: ‘To call this a *mountainous country* merely would not sufficiently distinguish it from others of a like denomination, nor give a proper impression of its true character, when that term is understood to imply an intermixture of hills and valleys. But if a *country of mountains* be an intelligible phrase, it may with great justice be applied to Boutan, or at least to that part of it through which I have travelled.’¹⁰² The reception they received and places they observed in this encounter fundamentally expanded European horizons of Himalayan spaces, also contributing nuance alongside Gorkhali martial representations.

Puran Giri conducted Turner to Shigatse where he was relatively successful: He met with the infant Panchen Lama and Shamarpa on 4 December 1783 and was given assurances by the regent of the ‘unshaken attachment’ between Tibet and Calcutta, and promised that EIC merchants would be welcomed.¹⁰³ These matched the assurances given to Bogle some years earlier. Turner benefited greatly from their Himalayan enterprise, being granted a substantial reward. Upon returning from India in 1798 and the publication of his *Account*, subsequently translated into German, French and Italian, he received the desired scholarly acclaim and was admitted to the Royal Society.¹⁰⁴ The career of Davis likewise flourished: rising within the Company’s civil service he struck up a friendship with

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.63.

¹⁰³ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.239.

¹⁰⁴ Aris, ed., *Views of Medieval Bhutan*, p.26.

William Jones, founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He entered this institution and became reputed as an expert on Indian astronomy, himself joining the Royal Society in 1792. He returned to the Himalayas with artist Thomas Daniell and his nephew William Daniell in 1791.¹⁰⁵ Commercially the adventures of Bogle and Turner brought some favourable rates in Tibet, and Puran Giri's monastery near Calcutta. However, these advances were fairly short-lived. Despite having progressed EIC-Tibetan relations, Shamarpa had to seek refuge from Chinese officials in Kathmandu shortly after Turner's visit, having alleged that his brother the former Panchen Lama was poisoned. It would be almost three decades before another British representative travelled to Tibet in 1811. That was Thomas Manning, the first Englishman to enter Lhasa. Though he travelled with a letter of introduction from the Select Committee and met the Dalai Lama, he did so primarily as a Sinologist and ambassador to China. The Sino-Nepalese War brought all trade to a halt for almost a century, undermining any advances made in the 1770s and 1780s. Inroads to China were instead developed along the seaboard through the port of Canton, which would come to dominate European-Sino relations up to the Second Opium War.

VI:4 The 1802 Kathmandu Residency

The EIC were brought back to Nepal through an unusual chain of events including unexpected love and loss, an abdication and reclamation, factionalism, and political intrigue. Key roles within this narrative were executed by marginalized historical agents.

Nepal upon Kadir Khan's departure in 1795 was no longer under the regency of Bahadur Shah, since his nephew Rana Bahadur Shah had reached adulthood. The new raja's advisors succeeded in ousting Bahadur Shah from his inner circle. The former regent was then later imprisoned on charge of soliciting Chinese support, hoping to reclaim power. In 1797, Rana Bahadur Shah executed his uncle, removing his foremost political rival. Stability would be short-lived. The raja's three successive marriages plunged the succession into crisis and competition. He first married Raj Rajeshwari Devi, a Princess of Gulmi. Secondly, a woman named Subarna Prabha Devi. There are two conflicting accounts on this person's identity, though both stories caused great controversy: whilst some Nepalese histories claimed her to be slave, others claimed that she was already married to a prominent general. The raja's unconventional marriage was further frowned upon when Subarna Prabha provided a male heir, which Raj Rajeshwari had not. Then,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.33.

Rana Bahadur Shah fell in love with Kantivati, a widow who had travelled to the temple complex of Pashupatinath for devotions. Kantivati lived in the royal palace for six months before marrying the king, despite being forbidden as a widow.¹⁰⁶

Though mostly marginalized solely as a love interest, Kantivati played a pivotal role in Nepal's fate by insisting that she would not marry before Rana Bahadur Shah changed the line of succession, ensuring that when her son Girvanyuddha Shah was born in 1797 he was named heir. Without a male heir herself, Raj Rajeshwari and her faction supported this, whereas Subarna Prabha did not. Shortly after, Rana Bahadur's beloved Kantivati fell ill. The raja consulted physicians and holy men who could not prevent her health from deteriorating. He withdrew into spiritual retreat in the hope it would revive her, abdicating in favour of Girvanyuddha Shah and naming Raj Rajeshwari as regent. Kantivati's subsequent death in 1799 was devastating to him. Enraged, Rana Bahadur Shah punished those who had advised ascetic retreat and attempted to reclaim the throne. This drew Nepal to the brink of a civil war since many courtiers and military figures sided with the new infant Raja Girvanyuddha against his father. Widespread violence was averted when Rana Bahadur Shah fled to Varanasi. Raj Rajeshwari accompanied him and Subarna Prabha became regent.¹⁰⁷

The events that followed represent the victory of marginalized historical agents over superordinate figures. From Benares, Rana Bahadur Shah began to solicit the support of the EIC, hoping to launch an expansive military campaign against the courtier-controlled regency of Subarna Prabha. However, the EIC were hesitant to intervene. This was greatly influenced by the regency's intermediary Gajraj Misra, who having served Kirkpatrick in 1793 and Kadir Khan in 1795 had seen his political influence rise. His overtures at this time greatly countered the appeals of Rana Bahadur Shah. The EIC initially deterred from intervening by uncertainty over Nepal's relationship with China, whom they hoped to avoid conflict with.¹⁰⁸ The Governor-General, Richard Wellesley, proceeded to Patna in October 1801 in order to personally conduct interviews for guidance. He spoke to Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan alongside two messengers from Nepal including Gajraj Misra. They informed him that 'the Kingdom of Nepal is not, in any degree, dependent on the Chinese Empire, and that no connection subsists between those states, of a nature to limit the right of the Rajah of Nepaul to contract engagement with foreign powers'.¹⁰⁹ The assurances that China were uninvolved enabled the EIC to pursue a

¹⁰⁶ Vaidya, *Advanced History*, pp.132-141.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ *Governor-General's (Lord Mornington) Minute 16th May 1801 on the Connection between China and Nepaul*, in B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.287.

new allegiance with Girvanyuddha's regency, instead of the former raja. That these agents would provide such assurances is unsurprising, since they had travelled to Patna to secure EIC support. Their words persuaded Wellesley and Rana Bahadur Shah was ignored.

In return for their endorsement of the new regency, the EIC asked for a trade agreement. The terms they requested demonstrate the EIC's concerns and intent. The treaty first stipulated that both the company and the Raja of Nepal should 'constantly trust themselves to improve the welfare of the two states,' and also 'the prosperity and success of the government and subjects of both'. This allowed for the argument that should the Nepalese Durbar deny the EIC trade avenues into the country, they would be preventing its subjects' prosperity and violating the treaty. The treaty then asserted that 'the representation of evil disposed persons shall not be attained to without proof,' reflecting Company concerns over Anti-British voices within the Nepalese court. Thirdly, the treaty insisted that 'any further disputes need to be settled formally, with the British resident, Vizier [of Awadh] and Nepali government,' and that 'the Raja should declare any correspondence received by any other EIC agents'.¹¹⁰ Due to the localized negotiations conducted in previous years, the EIC wanted to move disputes away from the periphery, back into the high political arena. Kinloch after all had not sought permission from either London or his superior military commander Colonel Smith.¹¹¹

The treaty was agreed upon and signed on 26th October 1801. To enforce it, the EIC proposed to send an envoy that would reside in the city. This paved the way for Britain's first Himalayan residency, led by William Knox. He was further tasked 'to gather information about Nepal's inner and outer conditions, civil and military administration, resources and mines, and so on. For this reason, he was accompanied by the military surveyor Charles Crawford'.¹¹² However, despite being explicitly mentioned in the 1801 treaty, the presence of a British Resident was not accepted immediately, being subject to the political intrigues still raging in Nepal Valley. Knox had to wait many weeks on the border before being allowed to proceed.¹¹³ Meanwhile, Subarna Prabha's court debated whether to permit entry. Objections were reportedly raised by Tribhuwan Singh over the number of Europeans that a residency would bring – unlike the ventures of Foxcroft and Kirkpatrick, or Bogle and Turner in Bhutan, Knox travelled with two companies of sepoys.

¹¹⁰ B.L. IOR/H/635 Treaties and Agreements with Country Powers in India, 1795-1802, p.365.

¹¹¹ B.L. IOR/E/4/619, Bengal Despatches, p.260.

¹¹² Shaphalya Amatyā, 'The Failure of Captain Knox's Mission in Nepal', *Ancient Nepal*, 46-58 (June – November, 1978), p.10.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.12.

Singh's faction pointed out that the strength of the escort which accompanied the envoy was 'capable of effecting a revolution in the state'.¹¹⁴

These suspicions would not dissipate over time. On the contrary, the British Residency soon became entangled in factional conflicts, plots and intrigue. William Knox was acutely aware of the courtier pressures that had undermined the welcome of Foxcroft, Kirkpatrick and Kadir Khan before him. For that reason, the EIC sought to cultivate their own courtier support through a tactical allegiance with the Raja of Butwal.

According to Knox's correspondence, *vakeils* of the Raja of Butwal regularly appealed to him at Patna for friendship, which he supported on the grounds that it would increase EIC influence over Kathmandu.¹¹⁵ Knox's saw in Butwal an opportunity, partly in manpower: 'To keep the Nepaul Government true to their engagements they must believe that they could easily be punished for violating them, but this they know to be impracticable unless we acquire command over such a number of the hill people as would be requisite for the transportation of provisions and luggage, without which a military force could not penetrate any distance into their country.'¹¹⁶ He also considered it a military benefit: 'his [the Raja of Butwal] country opens the easiest access to theirs, [Nepalese Government] the most accurate information can be obtained from him and his people respecting the roads and passes, and his troops, not inferior to their own in quality, would be in number more sufficient to take those duties which, however necessary, could not be performed by men unaccustomed to making their way through pathless woods and over almost alpine mountains.'¹¹⁷ Knox's advocacy of an agreement with Butwal on these grounds demonstrates intersecting agendas and recollections. His arguments evoked memories of the 1767 expedition, and the benefits of this agreement echoed the recommendations outlined from the *Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country* written at the time of Shah's annexation of Morang. Yet they are themselves a repetition of the *Vakeils'* overtures to Knox. They too were drawing thinly disguised parallels with the EIC's past difficulties. Their voices reflect that of Ram Das in Kinloch's 1767 letters to Rumbold.

Knox hoped an agreement with Butwal in advance of his residency would 'reconcile the people of Nepaul and indeed all the hill chieftains to a connection with us'. Wellesley acquiesced to this plan, primarily for the access to timber that the Butwal Raja's

¹¹⁴ N.A.I. Foreign Secret, June 30th, 1802, No.45

¹¹⁵ *Extract letter from Captain Knox to the Secretary to Government dated Patna 30th November 1801, received 30th June 1802*, in B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817), p.294.

¹¹⁶ *Extract letter from Captain Knox to the Secretary to Government dated Ghorasaum 1st February 1802, received 30th June 1802*, in B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817), pp.295-297.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.297.

friendship could provide. He was acutely aware of the high stakes, advising Knox that he 'did not deem it expedient' to make their Butwal agreement so public that it 'might lead the administration of Nepaul to apprehend that these distinctions originated in a systematic intention of eventually enforcing the execution of the terms of the treaty through the aid of that chieftain'.¹¹⁸ The Governor-General hoped for a more informal agreement wherein the Raja of Butwal would voluntarily offer support and information, should the occasion arise.¹¹⁹ However, unbeknownst to Knox, the Raja of Butwal was not a close confidant at the court. Instead, he was effectively a political prisoner in Kathmandu having quarrelled with the Shahs over his ancestral territory. He represented a dissident, suspect faction within the Nepalese court. In part due to the solicitations of marginalized agents and in part due to a desire to counter previous errors by drawing upon the support of marginalized courtiers, Knox and Wellesley had unwittingly aligned themselves with an enemy of the Nepalese state who did not wield much influence over the young raja or regent.

Shortly after Knox's arrival the political situation shifted: a marginalized historical agent triumphed. This was Raj Rajeshwari Devi.¹²⁰ The first queen had become estranged from Rana Bahadur Shah as his favour with the EIC slipped away and his behaviour became erratic. In 1802 she seized the regency for herself, and from that position of power dismantled Knox's influence and the practice of the 1801 treaty. Leaving Benares, she travelled to the Nepalese border with a small entourage. Subarna Prabha sent soldiers to prevent her entry and arrest her. Upon this encounter the soldiers reportedly disobeyed their commanding officer, instead escorting Raj Rajeshwari Devi to Kathmandu. The audacity with which the queen travelled back unarmed and alone to Nepal, and the choice of the soldiers to support her, are significant examples of unexpected decisions made by marginalized agents that re-directed the relationship between the EIC and Nepal. Upon assuming the regency, Raj Rajeshwari first demanded from Knox the financial accounts of Rana Bahadur Shah – suspecting that the 1801 treaty was returning a sum to him that benefitted the EIC more than Nepal. She promptly withdrew the former raja's pension.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Extract letter from Governor-General Lord Mornington to Capt. Knox, 30th June 1802*, in B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817), p.302.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.303.

¹²⁰ Raj Rajeshwari Devi was not the first woman to hold political leverage within Nepal. The previously mentioned Rajendra Laxmi Devi ruled as regent for eight years. Although Raj Rajeshwari Devi's regency has been discussed in greater detail due to the presence of Knox's residency and consequent significance in Anglo-Nepalese encounters, they both contributed to a notable pattern of power at the highest level in Kathmandu. See T.R. Vaidya, B.R. Vajraharya, 'The Role of Swarup Singh Karki During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century In Nepal', *Ancient Nepal*, 121-122 (1990), 1-11.

¹²¹ Amatya, 'The Failure of Captain Knox's Mission', p.13.

Knox's outstanding request to establish a further residency and factory in Kirtipur was then promptly refused.¹²²

Further factors conspired against Knox that demonstrated a suspicion of his duplicitous dialogue with the Raja of Butwal. The guards placed at his door soon began to interfere with his communications with courtiers. The herb and plant collections of Francis Buchanan-Hamilton who accompanied Knox, completed by South Asian intermediaries, were likewise stopped.¹²³ These marginalized soldiers essentially cut the residency's communications. The final blow was struck when two British visitors, Proctor and Lloyd, were denied passports to Kathmandu. Knox issued an ultimatum, demanding their access. Raj Rajeshwari Devi did not respond, and Knox left frustrated.¹²⁴

Colonial histories attribute the failure of the mission to a lack of support from Calcutta, since Wellesley was pre-occupied with campaigns against the French and Marathas, and was wary of jeopardizing Chinese trade.¹²⁵ However, more significant was Raj Rajeshwari Devi's return to Nepal and her dismissal of the enterprise, considering Knox a *persona non grata*. With the complicity of soldiers escorting her and chaperoning Knox, his communications and manoeuvres were checked. The residency was withdrawn and the treaty of 1801 was declared null and void in January 1804.¹²⁶ Shortly after, the Queen regent annexed the territories of Knox's erstwhile co-conspirator the Raja of Butwal. Relations between Nepal and the Company, according to historian Amatya, 'relapsed to the same negative state as they were before the first treaty with Nepal in 1792.'¹²⁷ There were two notable beneficiaries: Raj Rajeshwari Devi emerged triumphant and powerful over dissident courtiers, and Mirza Madhi, a lowly South Asian *munshi* amongst Knox's entourage, was alone permitted to remain in Kathmandu as an EIC representative, effectively inheriting Knox's role.¹²⁸

VI:5 Buchanan-Hamilton's *Account of Nepal*

Accompanying Knox was Doctor Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, who in the footsteps of Orme, Dalrymple, Kirkpatrick and others wrote an account of the countries he travelled.¹²⁹

¹²² Vaidya, *Advanced History*, pp.132-155.

¹²³ Amatya, 'The Failure of Captain Knox's Mission', p.13.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.15.

¹²⁵ R. M. Martin quoted in Amatya, 'The Failure of Captain Knox's Mission', p.15

¹²⁶ Vaidya, *Advanced History*, pp.132-155.

¹²⁷ Amatya, 'The Failure of Captain Knox's Mission', p.16.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.15.

¹²⁹ Robert Orme, *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from 1745* (London: John Nourse, 1778) and *Historical Fragments*.

Buchanan-Hamilton had an extensive career in South Asia before being appointed surgeon to the Knox Residency. He had studied medicine, specializing in the causes and treatment of Malaria. He arrived in Calcutta in 1794 and joining the presidency's medical corps. In that role he travelled far, acting as surgeon on the expedition to Burma in 1798 and surveyor of Mysore in 1800.

Buchanan-Hamilton's *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* reflected on his time there in 1802 to 1804, was itself written in 1814 before the Anglo-Nepalese War, and was not published until 1819.¹³⁰ The introduction reveals that it was amended in the interceding years.¹³¹ Buchanan-Hamilton had previously published travel narratives, for instance the survey and narrative from his work in South India.¹³² He intended to do the same with his experiences in the Himalayas. The *Account's* corrective nature (this is notably the first text to adopt the 'Nepal' spelling other than Guiseppe de Rovato's short account) is generally considered by historians a sign that it was well researched.¹³³ Buchanan-Hamilton spent fourteen months in Kathmandu; whereas Kirkpatrick spent a fortnight encamped outside, and neither Kinloch, Logan nor Foxcroft reached the valley.

Buchanan-Hamilton's publication is critical to the study of marginalized agency within EIC-Himalayan encounters. He credited an array of sources from which his representation of Nepal derived, which was relatively unusual (whilst Rennell as previously discussed mentioned some individuals, and both Kirkpatrick and Bogle credited their primary guides Gajraj Misra and Puran Giri, Kinloch rarely did so).¹³⁴ First on his list was Ramajai Batacharji, 'an intelligent Brahman, from Calcutta, whom I employed to obtain information, so far as I prudently could, without alarming a jealous government or giving offence to the resident [Knox] under whose authority I was acting.'¹³⁵ This figure drew upon similar expertise to that of Kadir Khan, appearing as a master linguist able to interpret the accounts of Buchanan-Hamilton's other agents. Whilst caution with regards both the Gorkhalis and Knox himself may have hindered his movements, he certainly enjoyed a degree of liberty in Kathmandu. A more subaltern addition than Ramajai

¹³⁰ Harka Gurung, 'Nepaul to Nepal: Place-names in Two Early Accounts', *Contributions to Nepali Studies*, 23:1 (January, 1996), p.47.

¹³¹ His introduction stated that it hoped to portray the country before that war. Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.1.

¹³² Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (London: W. Bulmer & Co, 1807).

¹³³ Gurung, 'Nepaul to Nepal', pp.47-64.

¹³⁴ Such an introductory crediting of South Asian sources notably featured in accounts of the Schlagintweit brother's Himalayan ventures half a century later. Historian Felix Driver considered this roll-call relatively unusual in the literature of exploration then, just as it was in 1814. Felix Driver, 'Intermediaries and the archive of exploration' in Konishi, Nugent, Shellam, eds, *Indigenous Intermediaries*, p.12.

¹³⁵ Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.1.

Batacharji to Buchanan-Hamilton's list was an unnamed former slave who he employed to collect plants: 'finding him very intelligent, and a great traveller, I employed him to construct a map, which I have deposited in the Company Library.' In rendering this service, this marginalized individual secured liberty from the domestic services to a great extent. Buchanan-Hamilton continues: 'In order to enable himself to execute this task with more care, he refreshed his memory by several journeys in different directions.'¹³⁶

With regards the agendas behind this support, Pratyoush Onta rightly argued 'the possible motives of his sources in volunteering such information cannot be adequately discerned from what he said about them in his book'.¹³⁷ There are nevertheless patterns that emerge from Buchanan-Hamilton's observations, and notable alignments in their interests and his representation of Nepal. Many of these individuals had been outcast from the country. Maps had been drawn up by Sadu Ram Upadhyaya, the royal priest to the Palpa Raja, exiled to EIC territory, and Kanak Nidhi Tiwari, a merchant who had prospered in Palpa prior to Gorkhali conquest.¹³⁸ The Palpa rajas had sponsored plots and solicited EIC support in retaking their lands ever since. Buchanan-Hamilton also consulted Agam Singha, who claimed a hereditary Kirant chieftainship and who had been dispossessed by the Gorkhas. The list also featured Narayan Das, a scribe whose ancestors had held prominent political positions before been exiled.¹³⁹

Given the vested opposition of his sources to the Gorkhalis, alongside the impending Anglo-Nepalese War, it is unsurprising that Buchanan-Hamilton paints a violent picture of Prithvi Narayan Shah, particularly in the demise of two heirs to the title of Raja of Makwanpur in the aftermath of its annexation. Reciting a Brahman's story of their murder, one by 'the most cruel tortures which continued three days before he expired,' the other poisoned to cause 'the most dreadful ulcerations,' the surgeon wrote 'the character of the prince does not leave much room to think that he would hesitate about employing such means'.¹⁴⁰ Buchanan-Hamilton's account further supported Kirkpatrick's theory that Kathmandu fell after Ranajit Malla of Bhaktapur 'entered into a league with Prithvi Narayan against Kathmandu', a portrait of oriental betrayal and scheming that rendered Kinloch's success or failure trivial.¹⁴¹ This representation of violent and deceitful Nepalese monarchs was later used to justify the invasion of Nepal.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.2.

¹³⁷ Onta, 'Rich Possibilities', p.15.

¹³⁸ Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.1.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.132.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.180.

Buchanan-Hamilton subjected South Asian information to the same critical processes that Kirkpatrick applied in his conversations with Bahadur Shah, wherein their accuracy was queried based on the informant's South Asian ethnicity and record-keeping practices. When observing that Kirkpatrick omitted the city state of Gorkha from the *Chaubisi* alliance, Buchanan-Hamilton noted that 'Gorkha was probably omitted by the Gorkhali who gave him the information; as it being included would have been acknowledging for the former supremacy of Yumila [another city state within that league that the EIC believed had previously held authority over the others] which the chiefs of Gorkha now disavow'.¹⁴² There is further evidence of such influences and inconsistencies within his own informants' knowledge. For instance, he accepted the denial by one informant known as Hariballabh that the Yumila rajas extended their authority into Garhwal, against the consensus of all other reports. He valued Hariballabh because he was not just local to that country, but a 'trusted Brahmin'.¹⁴³ He failed to observe however that as an elite, local to that region, he would not likely acknowledge Yumila sovereignty. This was precisely the same trap that he criticized Kirkpatrick for falling in to. Whilst Buchanan-Hamilton did posit different informants' knowledge against each other critically, he did not recognize the value he placed on certain backgrounds himself, nor the competing political agendas of his more trusted informants.

Buchanan-Hamilton prioritized his own experience first. Yet he also drew upon the support of this array of intermediary figures. Some of these such as Ramajai Batacharji in turn employed subordinates, rendering his own interpretation a third-hand account. Intelligence from his informants provided the entirety of Buchanan-Hamilton's experience for some regions from Srinagar to Sikkim. In these passages, he drew heavily upon the advice of a Lama, 'who with part of his flock had fled the district of Puraniya to escape from the violence of the Gorkhalese, and who constructed a map of the country.' He furthermore turned to mendicants and pilgrims like those before him, attributing the position of the source of the Ganges on Indian maps to their knowledge. Buchanan's ultimate reliance on these sources is demonstrated by his own concession that his maps were incomplete – there being no information regarding the Karnali basin.¹⁴⁴ Thus, his position of dependence offered these different marginalized historical agents the opportunity to either secure greater freedom and reward, or push their own version of events according to their agenda, or both.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.224.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.265.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.5.

Beyond the assertion that Buchanan-Hamilton's *Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* was a product of his interaction with marginalized historical agents, there is further evidence within that text of marginalized agency playing a part in EIC-Nepalese encounters. For example, Buchanan-Hamilton's observations on the Tarai contribute towards a re-evaluation of cultivation and the seemingly 'natural' barrier of the jungle. Upon travelling through, many European observers including Kinloch considered it uninhabitable, poorly cultivated, and abandoned through fear of the Gorkhalis. Buchanan-Hamilton's informants provided him with a different interpretation. He was told that, prior to the Gorkhali conquest, the petty rajas of the lower hills 'did not promote the cultivation of this low land. They rather encouraged extensive woods, and contended themselves, in a great measure, with the produce of the forests'.¹⁴⁵ He believed the Nepalese Durbar continued this, particularly around the strategically important places of Hetauda, Makwanpur, Hariharpur and Sindhuli.¹⁴⁶ This indicates that Kinloch battled against both natural forces and the support that the local population gave, and furthermore that this was an existing policy that the Gorkhalis recognized and adopted. (This theory though should be treated with a degree of caution – migratory, nomadic Adivasi groups would maintain the forest regardless of whether there was an EIC threat on the doorstep. It furthermore casts the Gorkhalis in a militant role, prioritizing defence over cultivation and exaggerating their isolationist position.)

Buchanan-Hamilton like Kirkpatrick before him emphasized the relative autonomy of the regional *soubahs*, officials who effectively replaced exiled petty rajas in hillforts like Makwanpur. Whilst unable to administer more severe sentences, Buchanan-Hamilton drew attention to the ease with which they blocked complaints to Kathmandu, adding that collections of revenue were 'in a great measure left to the discretion of the Subah'.¹⁴⁷ Greater still was the freedom of the *sirdar*, the military governor with jurisdiction over civilian authorities, able to administer capital punishment 'without any reference to the court' of Kathmandu.¹⁴⁸

Francis Buchanan-Hamilton was approached for his Himalayan knowledge in the future. When war broke out, the EIC asked Buchanan-Hamilton to revise his old notes, recognizing the importance of his knowledge, and the importance of those who provided it.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, they consulted the various exiles and their emissaries in peripheral towns like

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.60.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.186.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.97.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.100.

¹⁴⁹ *Buchanan to Adam, 19th August 1814, HM644*, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.104.

Almora and Gorakhpur.¹⁵⁰ That becomes more pertinent once it is understood that he himself used South Asian informants.

VI:6 South Asian Knowledge and the Anglo-Nepalese War

By the 1814 the Gorkhali Empire had reached its peak. Having conquered Sikkim in the east, they annexed Garhwal and Kumaon in the west before being checked at Kangra by the Sikh Empire in 1809. Their high Himalayan border with Tibet had remained undisturbed since 1792. To the south however, the Gorkhalis went to war with the EIC. Whilst the British maintained an interest in opening trade routes to western Tibet and the lucrative shawl-wool production there, the two states primarily clashed over land rights. Nepal had annexed Butwal, a territory that paid revenue to Awadh, which in turn paid the EIC. The existing literature on this conflict is extensive, including works on the logistics of war.¹⁵¹ There are also volumes of documents within the India Office Records relating to its conduct and progress.¹⁵² The task of considering the role of marginalized historical agents within the Anglo-Nepalese War has not been completed, though Bernardo Michael notably emphasized the importance of small-landowner border disputes in contrast to the elite-level discussion over the Raja of Butwal's territory.¹⁵³ The Anglo-Nepalese War provides a neat comparative point with 1767, being the EIC's first invasion into Nepal since then. This chapter now highlights ways in which past failures and marginalized historical agents played a critical role, primarily in the planning stage of the conflict.

Parallels are first observed in the EIC's strategic design for the conflict. Efforts were made to avoid the mistakes of the past, and mitigate against previous Gorkhali strengths. Rather than a march to Kathmandu through easily defendable passes, the 1814 invasion instead heeded the advice of the *Attack on Nepaul* in launching numerous columns across the frontier, stretching the outnumbered Gorkhali forces. Cautious of the costs of war and intervention, the enterprise was funded in part by the Nawab of Awadh, on whose

¹⁵⁰ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.101.

¹⁵¹ Recently the detailed work of John Pemble, *Britain's Gurkha War: The Invasion of Nepal 1814-1816*, (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2008).

¹⁵² See B.L. IOR/H/515 Papers concerning Nepal, including the Nepal War 1814-1816 (1767-1817), IOR/H/516, Papers concerning the Marquis of Hastings and the Nepal War (1824), and IOR/H/643-656 The Nepal War 1814-1816.

¹⁵³ See Bernardo A. Michael, 'The Tarai: A Part of Moghlan or Gorkha? Perspectives from the Time of the Anglo- Gorkha War', *The Journal for the Association of Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 29:1 (2010), 'Writing a World History of the Anglo-Gorkha Borderlands in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal of World History*, 25:4 (2014) and *Statemaking and Territory in South Asia: Lessons from the Anglo-Gorkha War (1814-1816)* (London: Anthem Press, 2012).

behalf the EIC claimed intervention. Officials in Calcutta ascertained first whether a war with Nepal would jeopardize their Chinese trade, echoing concerns before the deployment of Knox's residency.¹⁵⁴ The EIC sent surveyors into the foothills in order to guarantee the routes, for instance Felix Raper who returned extensive reports about Kumaon.¹⁵⁵ The campaigning did not begin until after the rains. There was a greater endeavour to counteract Gorkhali messaging and espionage: in the past Shah had corresponded with the Company in order to buy time. This was attempted by the Nepalese Durbar in 1814 and was abruptly dismissed. There was more of a concerted effort to intercept correspondence – the archives contain extensive Nepalese letters and their translations bound for spies and servants.¹⁵⁶ EIC surveyors were able to pinpoint the key east-west lines of communication in Nepal through which these messages were passed, and suggest ways in which it might be severed.¹⁵⁷

The invasion force's composition differed to that of 1767, with a greater impetus on knowledge of the terrain and language. For instance, the soldiers of Harrakh Deo Joshi, an elite from Kumaon and Garhwal who was exiled after Gorkhali conquest, would constitute a key component.¹⁵⁸ The EIC also hoped for better communications between the military column's leadership and South Asian cohorts, the commander asking the government 'to sanction expenditure on a "pundit for Persian and Newari" an English writer and a larger establishment of runners'.¹⁵⁹

The EIC made a concerted effort to solicit Indian informants and those with Himalayan experience. Much of the knowledge from this source base was pooled together by George Rutherford, Civil Surgeon at the border town of Moradabad. Christopher Bayly wrote extensively of these efforts in *Empire and Information*.¹⁶⁰ Rutherford offered his service based on his knowledge of the Himalayas, having managed the Company's timber agency and overseen the annual investment in hill produce at Kashipur, present day Uttarakhand.¹⁶¹ Through Rutherford, the company turned to a wide-ranging array of individual and group informants, many of whom were previously involved in EIC-Nepalese encounters.

¹⁵⁴ B.L. IOR/H/647 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814-1815), pp.5-12.

¹⁵⁵ *Description of the Route from Almora in Kumaon to Burokeru Garh*, in B.L. IOR/H/645 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814-1815), pp.561-78.

¹⁵⁶ *Translations of Intercepted Letters, and Translations of Persian letters found and Hindi letters intercepted by Major Bradshaw, including letters from the Raja of Nepal*, in B.L. IOR/H/647 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814-1815), pp.457-499.

¹⁵⁷ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.103.

¹⁵⁸ *Hearsey to Adam, 24th August 1814*, HM644, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.105.

¹⁵⁹ *Rutherford to Adam, 1st November 1814*, HM646, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.104.

¹⁶⁰ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.101.

¹⁶¹ *Rutherford to Adam, 8th July 1814*, HM644, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.101.

For example, the EIC sought the advice of William Moorcroft. In his previous capacity contracting as a Superintendent of Stud for the Company, Moorcroft had travelled alongside Captain Hyder Young Hearsey to Tibet in 1812. Disguised as *gosains* with the support of local guides, they crossed into Tibet from Jyotirmath. On their return via the Sutlej Valley they were detained by the Gorkhalis, but escaped. Moorcroft and Hearsey travelled through a political tinderbox: the region was still contested by Nepal and the Sikh Empire. Their commercial success was limited – although they found Tibetan lakes and shawl goats, the search for suitable horse stock continued. However, many individuals involved still profited from the enterprise: On the eve of the Anglo-Nepalese War the EIC approached William Moorcroft who in turn went to the marginalized historical agents he had encountered in 1812 for knowledge – merchants, indigo planters and horse-breeders who he had met on his travels.¹⁶²

In reward for his provision of information, Moorcroft secured permission to travel extensively from 1816 until his death in 1825, visiting Bukhara in Uzbekistan. This expedition earned him renown and his narratives were published in 1841.¹⁶³ By the nineteenth century such adventuring had mostly been curtailed by faster sailing times with which the Court of Directors could instruct their servants, the extensive copying of consultation and accounts that would-be adventurers were subjected to from 1754 and 1787 respectively, and the very public condemnation of ‘nabobs’ alongside the trial of Hastings.¹⁶⁴ Moorcroft’s further exploits were an exception, permitted in recompense for his services. Hearsey likewise actively provided information in exchange for further opportunity. He wrote to Calcutta in August 1814 providing rough sketches of Himalayan scenes, requesting command of a military detachment.¹⁶⁵ He was provided funds with which to raise irregular cavalry in Rohilkhand later that year.¹⁶⁶

Moorcroft employed a Kashmiri Muslim as a guide, Izatullah. This individual was appointed on the basis that he was well connected with the Delhi intelligentsia, being the grandson of a Mughal Governor in Lahore, Mir Niamat Khan, who had held power in the 1740s and 1750s.¹⁶⁷ Whilst his connection to such regional local elite mirrored that of Kadir Khan and the Bengali families, Izatullah also had a potential predecessor from Kashmir, if

¹⁶² Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.105.

¹⁶³ William Moorcroft, George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; In Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara* (London: John Murray, 1841).

¹⁶⁴ These developments were noted from Bowen, *The Business of Empire*, p.160.

¹⁶⁵ Hyder Young Hearsey to J. Adam, 24th August to 9th September, 1814, in B.L. IOR/H/644 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814), pp.79-84 & pp.373-374.

¹⁶⁶ J. Adam to Alexander Wright, Collector at Agra, 1st December 1814, in B.L. IOR/H/657 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814-1815), pp.84-85.

¹⁶⁷ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.85.

it is believed that Muktananda was indeed Kashmiri, as suggested by Baburam Acarya.¹⁶⁸ On Moorcroft's recommendation, Izatullah provided the extensive 'information from a Cashmeereean' alluded to in Rutherford's letters.¹⁶⁹ In return, he accompanied Moorcroft to Bukhara, and was highly regarded amongst EIC officials, being described by Elphinstone as 'intelligent, well-informed and unusually methodical'. From this position he was able to publish his own travelogues.¹⁷⁰

The EIC learned of a route to Kathmandu from one Francis Neville, a contact of Moorcroft.¹⁷¹ Neville's father was French and had served Prithvi Narayan Shah, casting artillery (some accounts suggest there were two or three French soldiers at the court in the late eighteenth century.) Neville had remained in Nepal Valley, establishing a business there and becoming fluent in Newari. That Neville would help the EIC in 1814 is a curiosity, not being British by birth but French-Nepalese, and being one of the few Europeans permitted to live in Nepal, where he would have spent the majority of his life.¹⁷² Whilst the intelligence he provided demonstrated the route to the EIC, it was not entirely useful – it failed to provide critical information on the terrain itself. Interestingly one of the other French cannon casters, those present at the Nepalese court at the time of Kirkpatrick's expedition, also provided intelligence.¹⁷³

Private traders such as Neville in Kathmandu had to be either very wealthy, or very resilient. Trade in Bengal, particularly that which involved the transportation of resources, demanded payments in advance that were high risk – subject to fluctuating prices, theft, banditry, damage and potentially piracy should commodities be shipped.¹⁷⁴ For that reason, it was customary for such independent traders to buy the protection of some person of authority.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, they often occupied a position wherein they had close contact with local elites, particularly courts outside EIC influence and political control. Their relationship to those political centres could be complicated – they could rival that local ruler in providing information to the EIC, engage in espionage, act as intermediary, or alternatively could pass information the opposite direction, to the South Asian court as their patron. Such complexities could explain the inconsistencies in Neville's intelligence.

¹⁶⁸ Raj, *Expedition*, p.23.

¹⁶⁹ B.L. IOR/H/516 Papers concerning the Marquis of Hastings and the Nepal War (c.1824), p.85.

¹⁷⁰ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.86.

¹⁷¹ *Moorcroft to Adam, 3rd October 1814, encl. 'Sketch of one line of road to the capital of Nepal,' HM645*, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.108.

¹⁷² Raj, *Expedition*, p.4.

¹⁷³ B.L. IOR/H/516 Papers concerning the Marquis of Hastings and the Nepal War (c.1824) p.88.

¹⁷⁴ Such risks are outlined in P.J. Marshall, *East India Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) p.39.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.37.

South Asian sources of information on Nepal were highly valued, regardless of rank. The EIC interviewed wealthy traders and *barkaras* alike.¹⁷⁶ Rutherford urged that the former, merchants previously based in Nepalese trading establishments, 'should also be used to secure valuable information from the cultivators of the interior.'¹⁷⁷ The *barkaras* meanwhile provided information, and were used to convey messages to the local elite. They delivered the Governor-General's proclamation to the hill chieftains between the Sutlej and Jumna, asking for assistance against the Nepalese.¹⁷⁸ This was followed by similar proclamations issued to the inhabitants of Kumaon and Garhwal.¹⁷⁹ One important source was the Raja of Palpa, his *pundits* and officers. The Raja himself had been in detention in Kathmandu in 1805 and gave a detailed, if outdated, account of the Nepali military establishments.¹⁸⁰

Many of these endeavours, such as employing suitable guides and approaching exiled rulers, echoes the 1767 approach as well as the recommendations of the *A Sketch for a Plan of Attack of A Mountainous Country in India*, and the *Plan for an Attack on the Napaul Rajah*, which were discussed in chapter V.¹⁸¹ The difference though was the critical evaluation of these agents that preceded their employment: in 1814 the EIC first asked questions unto a potential source's ambitions, loyalties and reliability. Kinloch asked no such questions of Ram Das, Mucktananda or the merchant employed en route in 1767. The marginalized historical agent's impetus for offering assistance was now given greater consideration. C.A. Bayly wrote that 'as a check on their reliability, the British kept detailed notes on the *barkaras* whom they employed as the war progressed. These do not appear to have been recruited from a particular ethnic or regional group'.¹⁸² The EIC hoped to avoid entrusting important duties to a *barkara* who might abscond, as was possible in 1767, or recruit solely from a specific group that could also be approached by Gorkhali agents in India. Calcutta rejected a plan to arm the subaltern territory captured in the Tarai on the grounds that their loyalties could not be ensured, instead writing to them emphasising various benefits of Company rule.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ B.L. IOR/H/516 Papers concerning the Marquis of Hastings and the Nepal War (c.1824), p.81.

¹⁷⁷ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.103.

¹⁷⁸ B.L. IOR/H/644 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814), pp.461-464.

¹⁷⁹ B.L. IOR/H/516 Papers concerning the Marquis of Hastings and the Nepal War (c.1824), p.303 & p.134.

¹⁸⁰ Moorcroft to Adam, 14th September 1814, HM645 in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.105.

¹⁸¹ 'A Sketch for a Plan of Attack of a Mountainous Country in India', and 'Plan for an Attack on Napaul'.

¹⁸² Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.104.

¹⁸³ C.J. Sealy (Magistrate of Tirhut) to Major Bradshaw, 16th November 1814; To John Monckton, Opinion of Major Bradshaw's Proposal to Arm the Frontier Peasantry, 24th December 1814; Notification to the Inhabitants of the Terai of the British Occupation, in B.L. IOR/H/648 The Nepal War, 1814-1816 (1814-1815) pp.150-157; pp.503-516; pp.152-153.

Agents who might pass information both ways were treated with suspicion, in particular the *gosains* of Patna and Benares. Notably one prominent religious figure, Mahant Banwari Das, seemed to command a greater part of his income from Nepal Valley despite being in possession of a substantial revenue grant in Bihar.¹⁸⁴ Owing to his suspected patronage by the Shah rajas, the EIC were unwilling to solicit his help or pass on information to those in his circle. Another *mahant*, Hari Sewak at Dehra Dun, was flagged for passing on daily information to the Gorkhali soldiers.¹⁸⁵ In the past, the EIC did not exercise such caution.

VI:7 Conclusions

As the war progressed, it became apparent that despite these adaptations, the Company's struggles continued: 'even a year after hostilities began the British had little political and military intelligence from the heart of the Nepal Kingdom. Their information was still drawn from exiles and spies who reported on the north-south routeways.'¹⁸⁶ The EIC once more commented that, contrary to their expectations, 'the expulsion of the Goorkhas is not a general wish.'¹⁸⁷ Ultimately, historical agents in 1814-1816 retained the ability to act contrary to the EIC's expectations, they continued to influence EIC fortunes, either facilitating success or frustrating it. Eventual British victory in this conflict should not distort the fact that this victory incurred a great cost. Nor does it represent EIC mastery over the challenges imposed by the agency of marginalized people of the Himalayan foothills and Tarai. Instead it was that agency, and the decisions of those people to support (or in other instances oppose) the EIC that facilitated success and shaped its trajectory.

¹⁸⁴ *Adam to Bradshaw, 30th September 1814*, HM644, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.106.

¹⁸⁵ *Rutherford to Adam, 13th November 1814*, HM645 in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.106.

¹⁸⁶ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.108.

¹⁸⁷ *Ochterlony to Adam, 20th January 1815*, in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.109.

Chapter VII - Drawing Conclusions: The Wider Significance of Marginalized Agency within Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Nepalese Encounters

Summary

A close reading of Kinloch's journal has demonstrated how marginalized historical agency greatly influenced the 1767 expedition's fortunes: Ram Das and Muktananda played significant roles throughout, first in delivering messages, designing an impression of the circumstances that would guarantee the venture departed, and then as guides conducting the expedition through Bihar and into the foothills. Similarly, the help or hindrance of local parties was critical, from the villagers who withheld their boats and *dandies*, to those who evaded the sepoys at Janakpur and those in the foothills allegedly provisioning the Gorkhalis. These individuals and communities frequently acted in ways in that were unexpected and unplanned for by the EIC. Even those contracted beforehand failed Kinloch, causing him to either adapt or flounder, for example the grain merchant Dondao Chaudhuri. These actions and responses to the presence of the EIC soldiers drove the expedition to a position of despair, and to circumstances in which the marginalized historical agents within the expedition's ranks either refused to travel, delivered ultimatums, or absconded. Collectively, these instances of agency sabotaged and scuppered the 1767 intervention.

Observations from subsequent EIC-Himalayan encounters in the late eighteenth century, concluding with the Anglo-Nepalese War, demonstrate some ways in which the 1767 expedition affected EIC approaches to the Himalayas. The substantial military, strategic difficulties ensured that armed intervention as an expedient was not deployed for over forty years. Significantly, the agency of hitherto marginalized parties instigated those changes: for example, observations unto the efficiency and loyalty of sepoys and porters in 1767 led to more commercial, diplomatic ventures such as that of Foxcroft or Kirkpatrick. Furthermore, from within the historical sources relating to those later expeditions, it is evident that the marginalized historical agents continued to wield great influence over the progress, even the outcome, of EIC ventures. The commanding officers continued to rely greatly on the assistance of those close to them. Notably the intermediary roles played by Puran Giri to Bogle and Kadir Khan to Kirkpatrick were crucial in conducting those emissaries to Tibet and Nepal. Their fortunes likewise continued to be orchestrated behind the scenes, according to more local, marginalized agency and interests: either the Capuchins

or regional Gorkhali officials barred Foxcroft from progressing, and the factionalism within Kathmandu court politics undermined Knox's residency.

This chapter now concludes the thesis by assessing the impact of that so far established marginalized agency in 1767, and in subsequent encounters up to 1814, on a set of wider historiographical debates.¹ The findings of the thesis are first positioned in relation to debates surrounding colonialism in eighteenth-century South Asia: The chapter acknowledges ways in which the application of *Orientalism* to EIC colonial policy in this era is problematic, but nevertheless emphasizes the presence of orientalist knowledge (or the idea of oriental despotism) within the colonial encounter as a historical agent that was itself challenged, reinforced, and utilized. Complexities within the historical role of South Asian collaboration and the substantial influence of South Asian interests on colonial trajectories are then underlined. The second part of the chapter revisits debates about Nepalese nationalism, nation-building and national identity: the Gorkhali conquests represent a significant divergence from traditional models of eighteenth-century South Asian statehood and power trajectories that have previously reflected a 'decline,' although there are some limited comparisons to be made between Nepal and the de-centralized, 'successor' states. The agency demonstrated by individuals and communities occupying borderlands spaces challenges existing notions that a distinctly Nepalese identity emerged at this time. Those peripheral historical agents nevertheless contributed greatly to EIC-Nepalese and Anglo-Himalayan political relations. The third and final part of the chapter explains the implications of marginalized historical agency within EIC-Himalayan relations for existing methodological and historiographical debates surrounding the study of the colonial encounter: the deconstruction of these events demonstrates how agency on behalf of various different parties playing a part in an encounter's outcome. Whilst some components of the encounter are more easily observed than others, it is critical that each component is explored and credited. Ultimately, there often exists an unknown quantity of marginalized historical agency with the colonial encounter.

VII:1 Anglo-Himalayan Encounters and the Study of Eighteenth-Century Colonialism

The study of marginalized agency within Anglo-Nepalese encounters has ramifications for the study of colonialism in eighteenth-century South Asia: in relation to debates about the existence and fortitude of 'orientalism', and in relation to debates about the role of the

¹ These were outlined in the conclusion to chapter I.

South Asian collaborator, South Asian resistance and South Asian interests in shaping the direction of colonialism.

Chapter I demonstrated ways in which previous accounts of the EIC interventions in this era were shrouded by what Edward Said termed ‘orientalism’. Colonial knowledge of the Himalayas and colonial imperatives augmented each other. Explorers, surveyors, soldiers and historians alike encountered Nepal, the Nepalese, and Nepalese history with preconceptions. Shah was considered autocratic and barbaric, the wider population groaning under the weight of his despotism. These features collectively justified the promotion of colonial intervention and expansion. Their experience in the Himalayas reinforced this vision: the accounts of commentators like Daniel Wright echoed their predecessors such as Francis Buchanan-Hamilton.² Over time, the representations changed to suit changing colonial agendas – for example the *gurkhas* presented in George MacMunn’s *Martial Races*, written after their incorporation into the British Army, were passive and loyal, in comparison to the Gorkhals within Buchanan-Hamilton’s account, on the eve of the Anglo-Nepalese War. Their own accounts therefore augmented that colonial knowledge base.

A review of the marginalized agency discussed reveals the inaccuracy of this representation. Prithvi Narayan Shah’s rule was not autocratic: he relied on the support of the military and civilian elite such as those within the *Chaubisi Rajya* who assisted him in his initial campaigns, or the landowner Ramchandra Parsai who upon hearing of Kinloch’s intervention chose to assist the local soldiers. Nor did those living under Gorkhali rule suffer from Shah’s despotism – many benefitted from military service or patronage. Furthermore, Nepal did not represent an isolated hill-state, reluctant to engage in wider political networks. Shah cultivated far-reaching alliances such as that which he began with the *Druk Desi* Zhidar in Bhutan. Closer to the turn of the nineteenth century, an investigation into the causes of the 1793 expedition reveals Nepalese involvement in the complicated, pan-Himalayan conflict of the Sino-Nepalese War that in turn hindered Lord Macartney’s ambassadorial visit to China the following year. Nor were the other Himalayan states isolated or adverse to involvement in international affairs: Puran Giri’s travels on behalf of the Tibetan Panchen Lama from Calcutta to Beijing reflect this.

Historians have argued that neither orientalism nor oriental despotism guided British colonialism during the late eighteenth century, and that Said’s concept rooted in the study of South Asian texts is more applicable to nineteenth- and twentieth-century South

² Wright, *History of Nepal*, p.231.

Asia. Amongst others, Christopher Bayly has suggested it did not characterize EIC expansion, writing that ‘ideas of Oriental Despotism...were not at this time regarded as manuals of political theory for Europeans in India. Rather, they were attempts to make room in European mentalities for the great Kingdoms of the East’.³ For Bayly, the visions of India and the Himalayas returned by travellers ‘were not tools of epistemological conquest, so much as conceptual fig-leave to conceal desperate ignorance’.⁴

However, the role of the concept of the oriental despot within Anglo-Himalayan encounters reveals the fig-leaf metaphor, and the dismissal of *Orientalism*’s application to the late eighteenth century, to be over-simplistic. Certainly, the EIC were desperately ignorant of the Himalayas, relying on the knowledge of Capuchins, traders and *gosains* amongst others. Yet a fig-leaf does not provide an imitation of what it conceals – upon observing the fig-leaf, the viewer is well aware that something is amiss, and that it is not an accurate representation of the human anatomy. On the other hand, orientalist knowledge of the Himalayas did not just *conceal* EIC ignorance. Instead, it was *replaced* with a masquerade: a set of values that were accepted as an accurate representation of the Himalayas. Its success depended on how convincing it could be. If representations of the Gorkhalis and Shah were considerably different than what was expected as per the viewer’s existing knowledge, it would not be accepted and EIC ignorance would be self-evident. The masquerade (orientalist knowledge) could merely replace desperate ignorance, or it could be constructed as per the interests and motivation of the masquerade’s creators (for example an EIC servant) in order to draw a particular response and reaction. This was achieved by appealing to the societal norms and values of the viewer (eighteenth-century Britain.) For this reason, orientalism is undoubtedly present within the 1767 encounter: Kinloch used existing notions of oriental despotism as a disguise in his representation of Shah. This was deliberate: it allowed him to pursue his own interests, in gaining permission for an intervention.

Bayly wrote that ‘Company servants were able to make and maintain relations with Indian powers in a pragmatic way’.⁵ This reflects the freedom with which EIC agents could pursue their agendas in this era of distance between themselves and the Court of Directors, itself a common denominator in the expeditions of Kinloch, Logan and Foxcroft. What Bayly does not acknowledge are the ways in which the deployment of orientalist tropes played a significant role within the maintenance of those power relations, despite them being forged on the ground, away from London. In a wider South Asian context, visions of

³ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.48.

⁴ Ibid., p.50.

⁵ Ibid., p.48.

Mughal decline in order to justify EIC intervention and expansion is present within Alexander Dow's *History of Hindostan*. Published in 1772, Dow supported British action on behalf of Mughal sovereignty on the grounds that the emperors had lost control due to the 'villany of their servants', that 'virtue had fled from the land', and that India had 'fallen into pieces'.⁶ Recent events in Nepal were considered an appendage to this fragmentation, Dow adding that 'in the vallies which intersect that immense ridge of hills [the Himalayas] there are several independent rajas, too inconsiderable to be formidable'.⁷ More specifically in relation to Nepal, orientalist tropes a prominent part in William Kirkpatrick's encounter, and in his adherence to stories of the mutilation and massacre at Kirtipur in 1766, previously discussed. Kirkpatrick's narrative would later be drawn upon by company servants forging new relations with South Asian powers: by those advocating an invasion of Nepal in 1814. Nor was this concept deployed exclusively by Europeans: Ram Das and Muktananda certainly crafted reports that appealed to Kinloch's sense of oriental cruelty, in order to ensure their employer Jaya Prakash Malla's objective of enlisting EIC support was achieved. It is therefore inaccurate to claim that 'orientalism was largely devoid of significance for the exercising of power within India'.⁸ Such a discourse was present regardless of whether or not EIC colonial policy represented a consistent, clear set of interests and directives in the late eighteenth century.

Initially, British accounts would not recognize South Asian agency whatsoever within the 'conquest of India'. As Huw Bowen describes, these narratives were 'seldom alive to the influence of local political and economic forces and cast the growth of the Raj as a coherent imperial strategy, as an inevitable imperial destiny'.⁹ The most infamous example of this is that of Robert Clive and the Battle of Plassey. This event has traditionally been considered a turning point in the history of India, and the beginning of British territorial control in Bengal. It was the culmination of South Asian agendas and manoeuvres that led to British 'victory' in 1757, notably a plot hatched in various corners of Bengali society to replace the incumbent Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah with his general Mir Jafar.¹⁰ However, for centuries Clive was lauded as the military hero and foremost antagonist, with historians drawing attention to British numerical disadvantage without recognition that the overwhelming majority of the Bengali soldiers did not fight, under instruction from Mir Jafar. In a Himalayan context, the actions of Gorkhalis were similarly

⁶ Dow, *A History of Hindostan*, p.406.

⁷ Ibid., p.420.

⁸ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.48.

⁹ Bowen, Lincoln, Rigby, *The Worlds of the East India Company*, p.xv.

¹⁰ Wilson, *India Conquered*, p.99.

discredited ten years later in 1767, with both contemporary EIC commentators and present-day historians instead favouring an emphasis on natural disasters and the choices made by Kinloch himself.¹¹

Yet EIC expansion would not have been possible without the collaboration and assistance of South Asian allies and intermediaries. Company officials both before and after Plassey were relatively few in number, instead their tax and trade revenues revolved around the co-operation or competition of South Asians.¹² This is self-evident within the Anglo-Nepalese encounters discussed: the 1767 expedition predominantly comprised of South Asian sepoys, and was directed by South Asian collaborators, Ram Das and Muktananda. Later, the support of hill-rajahs such as those of Palpa or Butwal were critical to the success or failure of EIC ventures. This has been appropriated by colonial historians to emphasize colonial benevolence, South Asian support, or even a South Asian origin: it is where Indian social groups lent their support to the emerging Company that shows South Asian origins – they were not merely assisting, but co-creating.¹³ Nationalist and postcolonial historians have found this unsettling, and have instead drawn attention to resistance, such as campaigns like that of Mir Kasim in Bengal, or the *Fakir* and Sannyasi Uprising as a specifically anti-British movement. This is evident within those interpretations of Shah as an anti-colonial champion, like that of Hem Raj Kafle discussed in chapter I.¹⁴ The difficulty is that such discourse creates a binary between ‘collaborator’ and ‘resistor,’ problematic in its deprivation of South Asian agency. Both characters are fixed in those roles, and react to the agency of British colonists, rendering South Asia ‘a place that has things done to it and reacts accordingly’.¹⁵ As Prasannan Parthasarathi writes, ‘the agency for the making of colonialism continues to rest with Europeans: the focus of much of this writing continues to be Europeans and their actions’.¹⁶

The role of South Asian agency within Anglo-Nepalese encounters on the other hand offers a number of opportunities to cut through such binaries. Firstly, collaboration with the EIC in the Himalayas did not necessarily condone colonialism, but was instead followed as a political expediency. Jaya Prakash Malla’s apprehension before requesting assistance is indicative of this, as is the Raja of Butwal’s assistance to William Knox. The help was not offered through any desire to see annexation of Nepal or Butwal to British Bengal, but a wish by the Raja to restore his own authority there. Service was not provided

¹¹ For example the attribution of blame on Kinloch, From the Select Committee Proceedings, cited in Raj, *Expedition*, p.14.

¹² Bayly’s masterful work, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, is exemplary of this.

¹³ Prasannan Parthasarathi, ‘Merchants and the Rise of Colonialism’ in Alavi, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, p.210.

¹⁴ Kafle, ‘Prithvi Narayan Shah and Postcolonial Resistance’, p.138.

¹⁵ Jon E. Wilson, ‘Early Colonial India Beyond Empire’, *The Historical Journal*, 50:4 (December 2007) p.952.

¹⁶ Parthasarathi, ‘Merchants and the Rise of Colonialism’, p.209.

out of allegiance to the British, but an alternative party such as Jaya Prakash Malla for Ram Das, or the Panchen Lama for Puran Giri.

Secondly, the discussed examples of collaboration and resistance reflect ways in which the EIC were pulled into South Asia, or pushed out of further involvement there, by inter-Indian and inter-Himalayan affairs (notwithstanding their own intent on having dominion over South Asia and enthusiasm with which they accepted such involvement when offered.) Consider the fortunes of William Kirkpatrick and William Knox in 1793 and 1802: factions within Nepalese courtly politics orchestrated both their visits to Kathmandu, and they were both cut short when the political situation changed (these changes being the end of the Sino-Nepalese War and the ascendancy of Raj Rajeshwari Devi for Kirkpatrick and Knox respectively.) The EIC rarely understood that these forces moved in the background, or that they were very unlikely to achieve the aims with which they set out. Kirkpatrick's *raison d'être* in Kathmandu had ceased before he even departed, whilst Knox had undermined the residency beforehand in his allegiances to Subarna Prabha Devi and the Raja of Butwal, rather than Raj Rajeshwari as the new regent.

In summary, the marginalized agency discussed within Anglo-Nepalese encounters draws attention to both the fortitude of orientalist tropes, and the ways in which they could be deployed within the encounter, by both South Asians and Europeans, in order to influence the outcome. Pausing to analyse the actions of supposed 'collaborators' or 'resistors' within these encounters gives greater credit to their agency as historical individuals. This untethers them from such rigid definitions which are laden with assumptions around reactivity and loyalty to colonial aims and agendas. EIC colonial expansion was therefore the result of an entanglement with inter-Indian politics, in which the interests of the participant EIC servants such as Kinloch played only a small part.

VII:2 Anglo-Himalayan Encounters and the Study of the Emergent Nepalese State and Nepalese Identity

The study of marginalized agency within Anglo-Nepalese encounters from 1767 to 1814 provides a significant contribution to nation-state and national identity historiography: The trajectory of Gorkhali power, and the means through which it was achieved in the late eighteenth century, confounds existing attempts in wider South-Asian historiography to categorize states in this period as either 'declining,' de-centralizing' or 'successor'. In relation to Nepalese nationalist historiography, the interjection of marginalized agency within that narrative of state-formation asks critical questions of the supposed development of a national Nepalese identity at this time. That interjection emphasizes the

significance of geographically and politically peripheral factors in shaping EIC-Nepalese relations.

At first glance, the eighteenth century in South Asia was a time of significant change: in 1700 the majority of the subcontinent was ruled by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, in which the EIC were peripheral coastal traders alongside other Europeans. By 1800 the political landscape had transformed, and was now characterized by immense struggles between the Marathas and the British, with Mughal authority in Delhi merely a figurehead, and other European traders more or less departed. The intermittent years were for a long time characterized as a 'dark age' of chaos and decline, in which the Mughals themselves were despotic and exploitative.¹⁷ This was itself a component of the colonial discourse, justifying intervention and British possession. More recently, historians have emphasized a 'decentralization' of Mughal authority and economic activity in states such as Bengal and Mysore. Attention has likewise been drawn to the vibrancy of successor states, and a new South Asian political order in which the Maratha and Sikh Empires claimed significant ascendancy rather than British conquest.¹⁸

Once the previously neglected Himalayan states of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet and incorporated into the fold of South Asian studies, these visions of the eighteenth century crumble. The rise of the Gorkhali state from 1743 to 1814 defies such orderly categorization. The emphasis that this thesis has placed on hitherto marginalized competing political agendas within the Gorkhali conquests challenges notions that this was an era of chaos, a 'dark-age,' in which martial law and force ruled. Gorkha's assimilation of smaller states counters the assumption that this was an era of political fragmentation. Nor was its rise a component of the de-centralization of the Mughal Empire: unlike the Sikh Empire likewise in ascendancy, the hill-rajahs had not previously been vassals to the Emperor and did not conquer any former territory of the Mughals, excepting tracts of the Tarai from the Nawab of Awadh. Nepal was not a tributary state to another South Asian power that would appeal to the EIC, such as Tanjore. The Kathmandu Durbar was not a significant theatre for the play of European rivalries through the support of different factions, as was the case for Arcot. There is some resemblance between the *Jhara* military system of the Gorkhalis and that of the Marathas.¹⁹ However, despite both being upland, Hindu states, there were no light, fast cavalry raids or marauding parties. The Gorkhali

¹⁷ The most notable example of this is Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, 3rd edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ The works of Muzzafar Alam, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Christopher Bayly are notable examples of these interpretations.

¹⁹ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

soldiers were directly trained for the terrain in which they fought, but that training was not innovative, but quite traditional. The emergence of Nepal by the turn of the century therefore encourages us to consider South Asian state-making in the eighteenth century on a more regional, fragmented basis.

State-formation in the Himalayas cannot be separated entirely from that of the rest of South Asia, and certainly a critique within chapter I was that such a comparative point had previously been neglected. However, Gorkha's rise to power can be placed within a network of 'connected histories'.²⁰ The implications of and relationships with those South Asian developments should be recognised alongside those across the mountains (Nepal's turbulent relationship with Tibet and China in this era) and indeed the mountain topography of Nepal itself, unique in its size and scale. This has been described as 'the one underlying feature', in Nepalese history which 'even today distinguishes the Himalayan region from others in South Asia and elsewhere'.²¹ A good example of these connected histories intersecting with the significance of that landscape is Kirkpatrick's expedition, wherein two Himalayan states went to war over historic commercial issues mostly contained within that space – the salt trade and Malla coinage. Owing to Tibet's tributary status, China was soon drawn into the conflict. The parameters of the EIC's involvement were shaped by a wider South Asian history of European soldiers fighting for South Asian rulers, and Bahadur Shah's wariness of the consequences of that. Ultimately though, despite these Indian and Chinese interjections, the conflict was concluded before Kirkpatrick even set out, owing to very localised features in that topography and space – the Chinese army being undermined by local supply in the high, bleak setting of the mountain passes, and Bahadur Shah bowing to local, partisan pressure to sign a treaty.

Chapter I demonstrated ways in which historians of Nepal considered this period one of national identity forging, and state formation. This ranged from canonical writers such as Baburam Acharya and Dili Raman Regmi to more recent endeavours such as that of Hem Raj Kafle. These texts emphasized the unification rather than conquest of small polities and cultures with shared characteristics, that quickly rallied around a Nepalese state in response to colonial aggression. By all means the Gorkhalis did undergo the rise in power that evades categorization into either a declining state or successor state as per the above argument, becoming a considerably larger state that maps very neatly onto present day Nepal. However, the study of marginalized agency within this rise reveals conflicting loyalties within this narrative. Contrary to nationalist accounts, very few participants in

²⁰ Subrahmanyam, 'One Asia or Many?', 5-43.

²¹ Clarke, 'Blood and Territory', p.96.

these encounters conceptualized a ‘state of Nepal,’ or ‘Nepalese identity,’ during this era. The factionalism between the three Malla rulers of Nepal Valley in 1767, and the ways in which some Patan merchants felt stronger ties to Gorkha, demonstrated little unity amongst Newari cities, let alone the wider foothills region. Once more, the unique mountain landscape secures this divergence in patterns of state formation. As Clarke reflected, whilst ‘Elsewhere in Asia traditional states had been incorporated into modern empires and then gave rise to their own states in a western image. In the Himalaya, any such clear progression as detailed above is constrained by mountain topography, and there is a continual tendency to drop back into more local relations’.²² Dissident voices throughout EIC-Nepalese encounters and throughout the rise of the ‘Gorkhali Empire’, such as the Rajas of Morang in 1774, Butwal in 1802, and Palpa in 1814 further validate this.

The significance of developments within peripheral spaces inbetween South Asian polities for wider political relations is mirrored elsewhere in the eighteenth century Himalayas. Consider for example Mahesh Sharma study of the hill-state of Kangra, which at the turn of the nineteenth century was sandwiched between the Gorkhali and Sikh Empires. Whilst most states were swallowed up by the Gorkhalis, the ruler of Kangra opted instead to negotiate a treaty with Ranjit Singh and the Sikh Empire, in order to oust the Gorkhalis from his territory.²³ Once the latter were defeated however, the Sikh Maharajas struggled to control their new vassal state. Sharma writes: such protests, though led by powerful regional chieftains with limited goals, were all the more significant as they could mobilise fluid ethnicities, communities and nationalities spread over a vast geography of hilly terrain’.²⁴ In emphasising these challenges, Sharma hoped to point out ways in which ‘the authority of the Maharaja was constantly contested and re-constructed, particularly by the margins’.²⁵

With regards the marginalized, subaltern historical agents within this thesis, visions of the state and state boundaries in this space and time align more closely with Benedict Anderson’s conceptualization of borderlands. According to Anderson, boundaries in pre-modern South Asia were ‘porous and indistinct’ façades where sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another’.²⁶ This was applicable to those regions in which the 1767

²² Ibid.

²³ Mahesh Sharma, ‘The Frayed Margins of Empire: Early Nineteenth Century Panjab and the Hill States’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 54:4 (2017), p.510.

²⁴ Ibid., p.530.

²⁵ Ibid., p.528.

²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.226.

expedition travelled through, wherein the loyalty of villagers to local rajas, whether to the Khandavalas of Darbhanga, Sens of Makwanpur, Mallas of Kathmandu, or Shahs of Gorkha, were unclear and shifting. In his analysis of borderlands space and the Marathas, Stewart Gordon added that a frontier was a 'broad band between two heartland areas, in which the Deshmukh or petty rajah might pay taxes and offer loyalty to either side or none or both, depending in the perceived relative strength of the kingdoms'.²⁷ The concept of a 'heartland' is problematic since it prioritizes an external culture over a local one: interpreting the EIC-Nepalese borderlands this way is to fill that space with weakened degrees of British and Gorkhali influence, rather than localized political interests. Gordon's comment is nevertheless significant in its reflection on shifting loyalties: this is observable in the recruitment of former landowners in 1814 such as Harrakh Deo Joshi, and in the possibility that settlements like Janakpur and Darbhanga were abandoned in order to avoid taxation.

The actions, interests and decisions of marginalized historical agents occupying the borderlands region were not motivated by Nepalese nationalism or an association with a Nepalese identity. However, they did play a fundamental role in the development of Anglo-Nepalese relations. The events of 1767 instigated a changing state-level approach to the borderlands region: one that placed an emphasis on the fortification of strategic passes, since that prevented Kinloch's progression that autumn.²⁸ It was moreover in the aftermath of 1767 that the Gorkhalis began encouraging a re-wilding of the Tarai jungle as a natural barrier.²⁹ Finally, the contribution made by local interests within Anglo-Nepalese encounters, such as the accommodation of EIC sepoy at Darbhanga or the provisioning of Gorkhali soldiers at Sindhuli, led to greater freedom and incentives offered to peripheral residents on behalf of the state. This was observed by Kirkpatrick, who was informed that these were offered to prevent allegiance to the former Sen rulers.³⁰

Local encounters with EIC expeditions drew those inhabitants into allegiance and relations with the British. These in turn significantly influenced the outcome of Anglo-Nepalese conflicts and disputes. The Raja of Morang may have contacted the EIC in 1773 after having permitted independent traders to operate in the region. The invasion of Cooch Behar by John Jones in support of Dharendra Narayan drew that state into the colonial sphere. These encounters could likewise divert communities into the Gorkhali fold: the encounter between the residents at Sindhuli and the 1767 EIC column led to greater

²⁷ Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation*, p.38.

²⁸ Neil Howard, 'An Introduction to the Fortifications of Central Nepal,' *European Bulletin on Himalayan Research*, 9 (1995).

²⁹ A policy suggested within the *Dinyopades*, p.42.

³⁰ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p.24.

patronage of those landowners by Shah and greater links to Nepal Valley. Collectively these events, influenced by marginalized agency, directed EIC-Nepalese relations towards the confrontation of 1814, a significant, wide ranging colonial conflict involving multiple columns and draining the EIC finances. As Christopher Bayly argued: frontier wars they might have been, but they did stall the Company government.³¹

The enquiry into how marginalized historical subjects acted and reacted within EIC-Nepalese encounters contributes greatly to the history of eighteenth-century South Asian state formation: the revised interpretation of Gorkhali expansion unchains those events from metanarratives of South Asian nationhood in this era, whether colonialist views of despotic, martial and declining states, or emergent economic centres that decentralized former Mughal authority. Instead, Nepal must be regarded on its own terms. Within that historical narrative, the actions and loyalties of borderlands communities and peripheral historical agents indicate a subscription to neither a Nepalese state, nor a Nepalese identity. Nevertheless, their actions within EIC-Nepalese encounters proved very significant in directing relations between the two powers.

VII:3 Marginalized Agency and the Deconstruction of the Encounter

The role of marginalized agency within EIC-Nepalese encounters from 1767 to 1814 has implications for the wider study of such agency (whether local, subaltern or peripheral) in eighteenth-century South Asia. Firstly, it demonstrates the futility in mapping patterns or essentializing criteria onto such historical agents. Instead, the examples discussed within this thesis allow for a recognition and celebration of the hybridity and unpredictability in the roles played and actions taken. Secondly, the acknowledgement of those roles allows for a historiographical revision of how we approach the study of the ‘encounter’ itself, encouraging the deconstruction of such a historical event into multiple interactive components. Whilst some of those components are more difficult to analyse than others, this should not result in their dismissal, but could instead lead to a recognition of their unknown quantity. There is therefore a consistency in the presence of marginalized agency within the encounter.

Although there are repeated actions and striking similarities, there are no definitive, essential rules for how the marginalized historical agents within EIC-Nepalese and wider Anglo-Himalayan encounters acted, considered over a number of criteria: Some individuals local to the borderlands regions in which these encounters took place supported the EIC

³¹ Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.98.

against the Gorkhali state in their actions, for example Agam Singha and Harrakh Deo Joshi during the Anglo-Nepalese War, whilst others did vice versa, for instance Ramchandra Parsai and Chumpan Singh Thapa at Sindhuli in 1767 or Hari Mahant Sewak at Dehra Dun in 1814. Whilst some delivered resources to the EIC, such as the merchant Mirza Settar travelling to join George Bogle in Bhutan, others failed to provide that service, for example the grain merchant Dondao Chaudhuri in 1767. That trader was also deceptive and misleading with regards his capacity to help, whereas the villagers at Janakpur were open in their explanation that they could not do so. Some individuals approached the EIC, for example the emissaries of Jaya Prakash Malla in 1767 and Dharendra Narayan in 1773, whilst others evaded any encounter with the British, notably those at Janakpur in 1767 and those who avoided contact with James Rennell at Olipur. There were some individuals whose information was valued, whilst that of others was dismissed. The character reference with which the loyalty of Mahant Banwari Das was questioned in 1814 is testimony to this. The value placed on such intelligence was often misplaced, as was the case with that of Ram Das in 1767. These temporary allegiances were not unchanging: sepoys, coolies and guides appear to leave Kinloch's side in the closing stages of 1767. Francis Neville on the other hand moved the opposite direction, providing geographical knowledge to the EIC in 1814 despite a lifetime of residency and patronage at the Nepalese Durbar.

The reason for these inconsistencies is that there is no underlying cultural or political identity common to the marginalized historical subject. Instead, what emerges is a hybridity in marginalized agency, and a productivity in asking what individual circumstances might have led to the actions taken. In considering the roles of intermediaries within exploration narratives, Felix Driver recently called for an approach that 'would highlight the networks, resources, and practices on which exploration depended, and through which intermediaries gained their influence. We need to consider the spatial infrastructure and logistics of expedition-making; the role of in-between places as well as people'.³² This is certainly helpful in explaining the events of 1767 and subsequent encounters: the actions of villagers and landowners at Sindhuli that year cannot be understood without an appreciation of their position in relation to both the Gorkhali military conscription and reward being enacted, and to the presence of an EIC military force. An individual within an encounter may well be involved in networks spreading far beyond the space in which that takes place. For example, the landholding interests of Mahant Banwari Das in 1814 spread from Patna to Nepal Valley. These networks could in fact stretch far beyond the colonial

³² Driver, 'Intermediaries and the archive of exploration', p.26.

lens, even if right before their eyes: George Bogle did not recognize ways in which the new *Druk Desi* in 1774 was hindered by support for his predecessor Zhidar until that support had erupted into civil war. William Kirkpatrick was oblivious to ways in which his presence in Kathmandu intersected Anglo-Chinese relations, and William Knox did not recognize the ongoing courtly struggles between Raj Rajeshwari Devi and her detractors.

The significance of these networks and relations beyond those directly involving the EIC s prompts us to ask what exactly constitutes an ‘encounter’. This thesis, as an exploration of the roles played by marginalized agency within these interactions, encourages an interpretation of the encounter as an interface between many separate components: within each meeting between multiple historical agents during the EIC expeditions discussed, attention has been drawn to a number of different factors. The existing knowledge of each agent, whether each participant lived up to these expectations, how their actions might be influenced by previous events, are all components present within the encounter amongst many other such factors, and have the ability to influence the outcome. In turn, experiences from that interaction and experiences of that outcome could be present in a subsequent encounter.

The difficulty in such a deconstructing interpretation, in relation to the study of the specific component of marginalized agency, is that some components are more visible to the historian. Components are easier to identify if the historical agent wrote extensively about them, or provided an alternative record of them. The outstanding example of this is George Kinloch, and his journal. On the other hand, components relating to marginalized historical subjects, for example their expectations or agendas, are considerably less documented. The historian is then left with an incomplete deconstruction. They are able to analyse and measure the historical significance of some components, but not all of them. These uncertainties, particularly around the marginalized components, has led some historians to despair. For instance, in the preface to the edited text of Kinloch’s journal, Yogesh Raj reflected upon the historical fog over the events of Sindhuli in 1767 and concluded that ‘a more productive question would be to ask whether there are any historiographical returns for investing so much attention to ‘decisiveness’ in historical events’.³³ For Raj, the incomplete historical record of the encounter meant that the role of the marginalized and the wider importance of 1767 for EIC-Nepalese relations could not be ascertained. Other historians have argued that the outcome of the encounter was influenced more heavily by the colonizer’s expectations and representations, since the

³³ Raj, *Expedition*, p.30.

colonizing discourse was too strong for marginalized components to present a challenge. The consequent experience drawn from an encounter was disseminated and shared in written accounts, giving further weight towards those colonialist components.³⁴

Even if a colonial agent consciously recognized colonialist preconceptions that either jeopardized the encounter or provided an incorrect representation of themselves and those they interacted with, they could not prevent its presence and fortitude. Consider the intermediary Puran Giri's role in a conversation between Samuel Turner, Samuel Davis, and the *Druk Desi*, Jigme Singye. The latter, having sent Hastings a landscape of his winter palace, desired to know if it was displayed, and if he might have a depiction of the governor-general's house. Turner confirmed that it was on display, Jigme Singye then asked whether either of them could draw. Turner wrote as follows:

My interpreter (with that false policy which is inseparable from a suspicious mind) eagerly grasping at an evasion, began to answer, that an Englishman was master of every art and science; astronomy, geography, mathematics, mechanics. I stopped him; for no vanity could allow such indiscriminate and preposterous praise; and I told the Raja in plainer terms that drawing constituted in England a branch of education; and that as we made unequal progress in the art, I could boast but little skill in it, but that my friend Mr. Davis had attained a great degree of perfection.³⁵

This reflects a challenge in dismissing the significance of colonialist preconceptions within the encounter: Puran Giri, when asked a question, posed his response having assumed how exactly Turner would have wanted him to: that in turn was likely based on previous interpretations on behalf of the British over at least a decade of service. Yet he was incorrect, since Turner did not intend himself to be represented as a 'master of every art'. The emissary concluded 'the employment of an interpreter was no less troublesome than protractive of our conferences'.³⁶

The solution is not to dismiss or downplay the role of colonial components in favour of those relating to marginalized historical agents. As Felix Driver reflected, 'in the context of exploration, there is a risk that turning the spotlight on the agency of intermediaries such as guides, consultants and interpreters simply replaces one kind of hero

³⁴ This was particularly resonant given that many encountered South Asia exclusively through EIC literature. 'Colonial categories were forged in the exchange of texts between officials, not in moments of encounter with Bengali everyday life'. Wilson, 'A Thousand Countries', pp.106-7.

³⁵ Turner, *An Account of an Embassy*, p.75.

³⁶ Ibid., p.76. This incident is further compounded by the source base, since Turner is narrating on behalf of Puran Giri. Moreover, Turner's subsequent intercession is highly unlikely to have taken place, or been understood by the *Druk Desi* – if he had understood Puran Giri's rhapsody for the English, he would not then have needed the interpreter.

myth with another.³⁷ Instead, it is more productive to embrace the uncertainties around non-colonial, marginalized components, since they create an unknown quantity in marginalized agency. For instance, consider Kinloch's journal entry from 2nd October, 1767: 'March'd to Harriatpore plain. Cross'd ten nulla and rivers in our way, picked up a fisherman who conducted us greatly and facilitated our journey, for the *harcarah* who return'd from Mr Hoggan led us twice out of the road.'³⁸ The fisherman in this encounter is crucial – they were one of the few individuals within the foothills in 1767 to actively engage with the EIC expedition, doing so in a supportive role that corrected the mistakes made by a *barkara*. There are so many further questions though that could enrich our understanding of this wider encounter: was the fisherman the only individual to help Kinloch in this way, or was this the only instance in which Kinloch recorded such help? Were they acting faithfully, given that the road ultimately led to heavy Gorkhali fortifications? Was this individual possibly acting on behalf of Shah, given that he had instructed spies to be introduced amongst the British? These questions are no more answerable now than they were to Kinloch at the time. However, merely positing the questions and exploring the plethora of possible answers is enough to challenge previous colonialist assumptions that they acted in full support of Kinloch, and nationalist ones that the region was hostile to the EIC.

VII:4 Conclusions

The role of marginalized agency in shaping EIC-Nepalese and wider Anglo-Himalayan relations has previously been neglected. However, as Jon Wilson wrote, 'even the most marginalized people had some capacity to tell their own stories and act for themselves.'³⁹ In revisiting this series of encounters, this thesis hopes to have begun investigations into such stories and actions, drawing attention to the significant contribution of marginalized agency as one of many interactive components within the encounter. It is acknowledged that there are many unknown quantities that render such investigations challenging; often difficult to conclude decisively, on which new methodologies could shed light. The contributions that these investigations make to wider historiographical debates could likewise be further developed, with more comparative discussion in relation to other South Asian regions and networks that are beyond the parameters of this thesis. In the meantime, it is clear that the interests, actions and reactions of marginalized historical agents, by contributing

³⁷ Driver, 'Intermediaries and the archive of exploration', p.25.

³⁸ B.L. Mss Eur F128/140 Journal, 2nd October 1767, Book 2, Folio 15b.

³⁹ Wilson, 'Agency, Narrative, and Resistance', p.246.

substantially to the colonial encounter, influenced the consequences of EIC expeditions and fortunes in the Himalayas to a far greater degree than previously credited.

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Appendices

A Note on Anglo-South Asian Nomenclature

Even before the colonial encounter, cities and places within South Asia could have held various names over the centuries, reflecting various languages, rulers and linguistic preferences. Eighteenth-century colonial officials were not known for their accuracy of spelling, often writing South Asian names phonetically and with little consistency. There are therefore many variables and influences, including the South Asian subject that initially recounts the name, the colonial official transcribing it, and those who copied it, that have resulted in a plurality of terms, often for individual places or people. A further layer of names has been added from the 1950s wherein governments of post-colonial national states endeavoured to reclaim the toponymical landscape from the discourse of colonialism by re-establishing former names, or promoting new ones altogether in local or new national languages of Hindi and Nepali.

It is recognized that both colonial and postcolonial names therefore reflect specific agendas, and the enforcement of them. Their usage is not intended as an endorsement. However, a thorough investigation unto their contested construction is beyond the parameters of the thesis. In the interests of consistency, this thesis has adopted a number of rules in its nomenclatural choices. In the event that there is uncertainty, all disparate terms used are included in the glossary.

- Wherein people and places are discussed in their colonial context, the colonial official name is adopted (for instance, Calcutta.)
- Wherein people and places are discussed in their present-day context, their contemporary official name is adopted (for instance, Kolkata.)
- Names for people and places within quotes are left unedited. For instances wherein the person or place is not clearly identifiable from the quotation, their contemporary official name is bracketed (for instance, Lalitpur [Patan].)
- Names within quotes are identified outside the quotation by their *International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration* spelling (for instance, Ram Das.)
- Place of Publication details are listed as they appear in the text (for instance, *Lalitpur: Jagadamba Prakashan, 2009.*)

Select Glossary

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Ali, Hyder</i>	The Sultan and de facto ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore, 1761-1782.
<i>Ali, Wazir</i>	A claimant to the throne of Awadh who rebelled against the British at the turn of the nineteenth century. His defeat and capture was aided by Nepalese support.
<i>Almora</i>	Border town between Nepal and British India in 1814, capital of Kumaon.
<i>B.P. Koirala Highway</i>	A road in present day Nepal, also called the H 06. The B.P. Koirala Highway roughly correlated with the portion of the intended route that Kinloch was not able to access.
<i>Bagmati</i>	A river running from Nepal Valley through the foothills to Bihar.
<i>Baisi Rajya</i>	A loose confederacy of city-states in western Nepal, consisting of 22 states in the Karnali-Bheri river basin annexed by Nepal mostly in the 1780s and 1790s.
<i>Baladiya bepari</i>	A South Asian occupational term. A contractor who had bullocks for hire, often involved in the transport of grain in Bengal and Bihar.
<i>Barker, Robert; Colonel</i>	EIC Senior Officer previously stationed in Patna prior to the 1767 expedition.
<i>Barra</i>	A district in northern Bihar seized by Kinloch in 1767 alongside Parsa.
<i>Batacharji, Ramajai, Batta</i>	A Brahmin from Calcutta who was employed to provide information by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton during his stay in Kathmandu. Additional pay offered by South Asian armies including the EIC. The <i>Batta</i> offered by the EIC was intended as a bonus to sepoys and officers in the field, or outside of EIC territory. Its withdrawal was the source of a mutiny in the 1760s.
<i>Bedars</i>	A community of messengers and runners (see <i>Harkara</i>) settled a few miles outside of Seringapatam, whose members served both Tipu Sultan and the British.
<i>Beg, Mirza Mughal,</i>	An Indian surveyor credited by James Rennell for his information about north-western India.

<i>Beruni merchants</i>	A South Asian occupational term: merchants who more often transported grain by boat in Bihar and Bengal. See also Bhasaniya Mahajans.
<i>Bettiah</i>	A city in north-west Bihar. In 1767 the Bettiah Raja held the most land in Bihar. The EIC based an Agent there who received Jaya Prakash Malla's initial letter to the Company.
<i>Bhadgaon</i>	An alternative Nepalese name for the <i>Malla</i> city of Bhaktapur, often used in Nepal Valley. See also Khwopa.
<i>Bhaktapur</i>	A Sanskrit/Nepalese name for a <i>Malla</i> city-state within Nepal Valley, east of Kathmandu. See also Khwopa and Bhadgaon.
<i>Bharat</i>	A term for South Asia, historically referring to the subcontinent that refers to India in its contemporary use.
<i>Bhāratas</i>	Ancient Indian civilization.
<i>Bhasaniya Mahajans</i>	A South Asian occupational term: merchants who more often transported grain by boat in Bihar and Bengal. See also Beruni merchants
<i>Bhawara</i>	A village in Northern Bihar, formerly the capital of the Khandavalas of Mithila (Tirhut) until it was relocated by Raja Pratap Singh in 1762.
<i>Bhot Bagan</i>	A Tibetan <i>Math</i> and temple in Bengal, consecrated in 1776 and gifted to Puran Giri Gosain by Warren Hastings.
<i>Bhotia</i>	Ethnic, cultural Himalayan group involved in the salt trade in Kumaon.
<i>Bogle, George,</i>	An EIC diplomat who travelled to Tibet in 1774.
<i>Brian Houghton Hodgson</i>	EIC Resident at Kathmandu in the nineteenth century, who wrote extensively on the country of Nepal.
<i>Buchanan-Hamilton, Francis; Doctor</i>	An EIC diplomat who travelled to Nepal with William Knox's expedition from 1802-1804. Buchanan-Hamilton later wrote an account of the country.
<i>Burke, Edmund,</i>	Eighteenth-century British politician and critic of the EIC.
<i>Butwal</i>	A territory between Nepal and India.
<i>Cabral, Juao,</i>	Portuguese Jesuit who visited Nepal in 1628.
<i>Cacella, Estevao,</i>	Portuguese Jesuit who visited Nepal in 1628.
<i>Call, Thomas,</i>	An EIC surveyor in the eighteenth century.

<i>Carcoat</i>	Khurkot, a settlement en-route to Nepal Valley between Sindhuli and Hariharpur.
<i>Chaubisi Rajya</i>	A loose confederacy of city-states in western Nepal, consisting of 24 states in the Kali-Gandaki river basin, including Lamjung, Palpa, Kaski and Gorkha. The confederacy historically had included Nuwakot, although by the 1760s this was a tributary to Kathmandu.
<i>Chaudhuri</i>	A leading merchant in every trade who received fees, represented grievances to the government, regulated the price of commodities, settled minor disputes and most importantly in this context, met extraordinary demand when persons of rank or troops passed
<i>Chaudhuri, Dondao,</i>	A merchant contracted by the EIC to provide grain for the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Chela</i>	A disciple within a Sannyasi <i>Math</i> , recruited by <i>Gurus</i> and given freedom to conduct business for the <i>Math</i> .
<i>Cheri</i>	The monastery in Bhutan that housed the Dharma Rajas during the eighteenth century.
<i>Chetri</i>	A caste within the former Khasa Empire and within Gorkha.
<i>Chichacotta</i>	The site of a battle between the Bhutanese and the EIC expedition of John Jones, 1773.
<i>Clive, Robert; Major-General</i>	EIC military and civil commander in the 1750s and 1760s.
<i>Cooch Behar</i>	A state inbetween the Bhutanese foothills and EIC Bengal in the 1770s.
<i>Coolie</i>	Colonial term for a labourer in South Asia. See also <i>Dandie</i> .
<i>Cornwallis, Charles; General</i>	Twice Governor-General of India, from 1786-1793 and in 1805.
<i>Crawford, Charles,</i>	Military surveyor who accompanied William Knox to Kathmandu in 1802. Crawford drew the first European map of Nepal Valley.
<i>Dalai Lama</i>	One of two political and religious figures of authority within the Gelugpa Bhuddist order in Tibet, the other being the Panchen Lama.
<i>Dandie</i>	Colonial term for a rower in South Asia. See also <i>Coolie</i>
<i>Daniell, Thomas,</i>	Prominent orientalist painter, friend and correspondent of Samuel Davis who accompanied him to Garhwal in 1791. Uncle to William Daniell.

<i>Daniell, William,</i>	Prominent orientalist painter, friend and correspondent of Samuel Davis who accompanied him to Garhwal in 1791 and engraved his drawings in 1813. Nephew to Thomas Daniell.
<i>Darbhanga</i>	A town in Northern Bihar that the 1767 expedition travelled through. See also Khandavala
<i>Das, Balaram,</i>	Headman of Janakpur in 1767.
<i>Das, Fakir Ram,</i>	Kinloch's guide in 1767. Ram Das was reportedly a <i>Gosain</i> who travelled throughout Northern India.
<i>Das, Mahant Banwari,</i>	A prominent religious figure at Patna during the Anglo-Nepalese War who also held land in Nepal Valley.
<i>Das, Narayan,</i>	A scribe whose ancestors had held prominent political positions before been ousted from the Himalayan foothills during Gorkhali expansion.
<i>Davis, Samuel,</i>	A romanticist artist and surveyor who accompanied Samuel Turner as far as Bhutan in 1783.
<i>Deb Raja</i>	See <i>Druk Desi</i> .
<i>Devi, Narenda Laxmi,</i>	Queen of Nepal, wife of Prithvi Narayan Shah, mother to Pratap Singh Shah.
<i>Devi, Raj Rajeshwari,</i>	Former Princess of Gulmi, first wife of Rana Bahadur Shah, and regent of Nepal from 1802 to 1806.
<i>Devi, Rajendra Laxmi,</i>	Regent of Nepal from 1778 to 1785. Wife to Pratap Singh Shah, mother to Rana Bahadur Shah.
<i>Devi, Subarna Prabha,</i>	Queen Consort of Rana Bahadur Shah.
<i>Dhanavanta</i>	A Nobleman who allegedly betrayed the Kathmandu city garrison and opened the doors to the Gorkhali in 1767.
<i>Dharma Rajas</i>	The verbal, physical and mental reincarnations of the original Drukpa Shabdrung, the individual founder of the Drukpa order. These <i>Dharma Rajas</i> delegated civil authority to the <i>Druk Desi</i> .
<i>Dhulikhel</i>	A strategically important <i>gadhi</i> in Nepal that Kinloch planned to pass en route to Nepal.
<i>Divani</i>	One of two offices within Mughal administration, alongside the <i>Nizamat</i> . The <i>Divani</i> gave tax collection rights to the office holder, the <i>Diwan</i> . The EIC gained the office of the <i>Divani</i> of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in the aftermath of the Battle of Buxar.

<i>Druk Desi</i>	The civil authority in Bhutan, meaning ‘Thunder Dragon Regent,’ often known in colonial sources as the Deb Raja.
<i>Drukpa</i>	The dominant Buddhist order in eighteenth-century Bhutan.
<i>Drukpa Shabdrung</i>	The founder of Bhutan, unifying the country in the early seventeenth century. Leader of the Drukpa Buddhist order.
<i>Dumja</i>	A settlement between Dhulikhel and Khurkot, along the present day B.P. Koirala Highway in eastern Nepal. Also referred to as Dumjah and Daupchah. Kinloch was promised by Jaya Prakash Malla that reinforcements would meet him there en route to Nepal.
<i>Duncan, Jonathan,</i>	EIC resident at Benares at the time of the 1793 expedition.
<i>Durbar</i>	A term for the court of a South Asian ruler, for example the Kathmandu Durbar. In Nepalese cities, governmental and royal complexes were consequently named 'Durbar Square.' Since the royal court often relocated, this thesis has often referred to the 'Nepalese Durbar,' unless specifically based at Gorkha or Kathmandu.
<i>Dzong</i>	Bhutanese term for a fortification.
<i>Ellis, William,</i>	EIC Factory chief at Patna during the 1760s.
<i>Foxcroft, George;</i>	EIC Emissary to Nepal in 1783.
<i>Captain</i>	
<i>Frazer, Archibald,</i>	A former Justice Officer in Bengal, appointed contracts for flood defences by Warren Hastings in the 1770s.
<i>Gadhi</i>	A term for a fortification in South Asia.
<i>Gandaki</i>	A river running south from Nepal into Bihar.
<i>Gelugpa</i>	The dominant Buddhist order in eighteenth-century Tibet.
<i>Giri Sect</i>	A Sannyasi sect that was based in the 1770s at Jyotirmath in present day Uttarakhand.
<i>Golding, Edward</i>	EIC agent at Bettiah to whom Jaya Prakash Malla's request for help was initially delivered.
<i>Gorakhpur</i>	In 1814 this city was an important outpost for the EIC, close to the western Nepalese border.
<i>Gorkha</i>	A city-state in Western Nepal, birthplace of Prithvi Narayan Shah.
<i>Gorkhali</i>	A resident and subject of Gorkha.
<i>Grand Trunk</i>	One of the oldest roads in Asia, running from Chittagong to Kabul
<i>Road</i>	via Patna, Agra and Delhi.

<i>Grant, [unknown]; Captain</i>	EIC military commander stationed at Bettiah in 1767, alongside the Company agent Edward Golding. Grant may have been a rival to Kinloch for leadership of the 1767 expedition.
<i>Gribastha-beparis,</i>	Grain cultivators who were in a position to expand. They purchased the produce of their neighbours at harvest or by means of advances. This they then moved into the market.
<i>Guiseppe; Padre,</i>	Father Guiseppe de Rovato, a Capuchin monk who resided in Kathmandu in the 1760s and wrote a prominent account of Nepal.
<i>Gulmi</i>	City state in Western Nepal during the eighteenth century.
<i>Gumashtas</i>	South Asian intermediaries, imposing rates on behalf of the EIC onto weavers and producers in 1760s Bengal.
<i>Gurkha</i>	Colonial term for a soldier from Gorkha, later from wider Nepal and the Himalayas, specifically relating to the Gurkha military regiments.
<i>Guru</i>	A role within a Sannyasi <i>math</i> , more widely used by colonial officials to reflect a person's religious status.
<i>Gurung</i>	A caste within the former Khasa Empire and within Gorkha.
<i>Hamilton, Alexander,</i>	A surgeon employed by the East India Company who accompanied George Bogle to Tibet, and later returned to the Himalayas himself.
<i>Hardy, Alexander; Ensign,</i>	A subordinate officer within the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Hariballabb</i>	An informant to Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in Garhwal.
<i>Hariharpur</i>	The site of a <i>Gadbi</i> in the Nepalese foothills.
<i>Harkara</i>	South Asian term for a running messenger, also used in espionage.
<i>Hastings, Warren; Governor-General</i>	Governor-General in Bengal at the time of the Bogle, Foxcroft and Turner expeditions.
<i>Havildar</i>	A rank within the EIC army, specifically for a South Asian officer, subordinate to the Jemadar.
<i>Hearsey,Hyder Young; Captain</i>	Accompanied William Moorcroft to Tibet in 1812, and later provided information during the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Hetauda</i>	Settlement within the Nepalese Tarai where George Foxcroft was detained in 1783.
<i>Hogan, [unknown]; Lieutenant</i>	A subordinate officer within the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Hurst, George,</i>	An independent merchant given permission to trade from Bettiah during the 1760s.

<i>Izatullah</i>	A Kashmiri Muslim who guided William Moorcroft on his venture into Tibet in 1812. Izatullah later provided information during the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Janakpur</i>	A settlement en-route to Nepal Valley between Darbhanga and Sindhuli.
<i>Jemadar</i>	A rank within the EIC army, specifically for a South Asian officer, subordinate to the <i>Subedar</i> .
<i>Jhara</i>	Military labour system imposed by Prithvi Narayan Shah.
<i>Jones, John; Captain</i>	The military commander of an EIC intervention in Bhutan in the 1770s.
<i>Jones, William,</i>	A Prominent orientalist painter, friend and correspondent of Samuel Davis.
<i>Joshi, Harrakb Deo,</i>	An elite from Kumaon and Garhwal who supported the 1814 EIC invasion of Nepal with soldiers.
<i>Josi, Nilakantha,</i>	Resident of Bhatakpur and spy for the Gorkhas in the early 1760s.
<i>Kadir Khan,</i>	A Bengali emissary who represented the EIC in Kathmandu in 1793, leading a delegation in 1795.
<i>Maulvi Abdul, Kang-an, Fu; Duke</i>	Commander of the Chinese troops in Nepal in 1792, who attributed his failure at Nuwakot to the intervention of British soldiers.
<i>Kangra</i>	The site of a battle between the Nepalese and the Sikh Empire in the early nineteenth century, prior to the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Kantipur</i>	Newari name for Kathmandu, a city in Nepal Valley.
<i>Kantivati,</i>	Queen Consort of Rana Bahadur Shah.
<i>Karnali</i>	A river in far-western Nepal.
<i>Kashipur</i>	A town in present day Uttarakhand and a site of an EIC timber station in the early nineteenth century.
<i>Kaski</i>	A city-state in western Nepal.
<i>Kathmandu</i>	The present day capital of Nepal, one of the three city-states within Nepal Valley, besieged by the Gorkhalis in 1767. See also Kantipur.
<i>Kazi</i>	A prominent political office within the Gorkhali state, given military and civil responsibility. Sometimes written as <i>Kaji</i> .
<i>Keergunge</i>	An unclear site near Darbhanga in eighteenth-century Bihar and the site of a <i>kill</i> .
<i>Khan, Anwaruddin,</i>	The Nawab of Arcot from 1744 to 1749 whom the EIC supported.

<i>Khan, Mahamed Reza,</i>	The most important Indian administrator during Robert Clive's governance whose family was to inform British policy in Bengal from 1756 to 1830. A relative to Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan.
<i>Khan, Mir Niamat</i>	A Mughal Governor and grandfather of Izatullah.
<i>Khan, Rosham; Subedar</i>	South Asian soldier given responsibility over <i>coolies</i> and sepoys within Alexander Hamilton's expedition.
<i>Khan, Wasil Ali</i>	An assistant to Mir Kasim and father of Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan.
<i>Khanchi</i>	Nepalese city-state that allied to Gorkha prior to Prithvi Narayan Shah's ascension.
<i>Khandavala</i>	Dynastic family established in Northern Bihar, the hereditary Rajas of Darbhanga.
<i>Khasa</i>	A former empire that encompassed western Nepal and Nepal Valley, from which the Gorkhali language was derivative.
<i>Khurkot</i>	A settlement en-route to Nepal Valley between Sindhuli and Bhaktapur, referred to by Kinloch as <i>Carvoat</i> .
<i>Khwopa</i>	The city of Bhaktapur has a distinctly different form of Newari language to that of Patan and Kathmandu. Khwopa was its title in that language.
<i>Killa</i>	A term for a fortification in Bihari languages, alternatively spelled <i>kella</i> .
<i>Kinloch, [unknown]</i>	Held the office of <i>Superintendent of Poolbundy Affairs</i> in 1770s Bengal.
<i>Kinloch, Charles; Ensign</i>	Brother to George Kinloch, accompanying him to Nepal in 1767, later in the service of the Dutch East India Company.
<i>Kinloch, George; Captain</i>	Commander of the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Kirant</i>	Former name for a broad region of Eastern Nepal encompassing Limbu and Morang, sometimes referred to as <i>Kirat</i> .
<i>Kirkpatrick, James Achilles;</i>	British resident at Hyderabad from 1798 to 1805; brother to William Kirkpatrick.
<i>Lieutenant Colonel</i>	
<i>Kirkpatrick, William; Captain</i>	Emissary to Nepal in 1793 who later wrote an account of the country.
<i>Knox, William; Captain</i>	The first British resident to Nepal in 1802.

<i>Kosi</i>	A river running south from Nepal into Bihar.
<i>Koss</i>	Also sometimes written as <i>Coss</i> , <i>Kos</i> , <i>Kosh</i> , <i>Krosh</i> , or <i>krosha</i> . A South Asian unit of distance, roughly 1.91 miles or 3.07 kilometres. Along the Grand Trunk Road and northern India wherein the EIC encountered the Himalayas, it usually referred to a distance slightly over 2 miles or 3.2 kilometres.
<i>Kukeri</i>	Sometimes written <i>Kbukuri</i> ; a traditional Nepalese and Gorkhali curved blade for both martial and everyday use.
<i>Kumaon</i>	Region in present day India, annexed by the Gorkhas and ceded to the EIC after the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Kunga Rinchen,</i> <i>Kunga,</i>	<i>Druk Desi</i> of Bhutan from 1773 to 1776.
<i>Kuti</i>	One of two significant passes over the Himalayas between Nepal and Tibet. See Kyirong.
<i>Kuvar,</i> <i>Ramkrishna,</i>	A regional Gorkhali commander opposing the 1767 EIC expedition.
<i>Kyirong</i>	One of two significant passes over the Himalayas between Nepal and Tibet. See Kuti.
<i>Lalitpur</i>	An alternative Sanskrit/Nepalese name for the city of Patan.
<i>Lamjung</i>	A city-state in western Nepal.
<i>Lietbieullier,</i> <i>[unknown] Mssr,</i>	A salt merchant at Darbhanga in 1767.
<i>Logan, James,</i>	Surgeon to the 1767 expedition. Logan returned to Nepal in the early 1770s.
<i>Madbesh</i>	The eastern portion of the Tarai region in Nepal.
<i>Madhi, Mirza,</i>	A South Asian <i>munshi</i> amongst Knox's entourage in 1802 who was permitted to remain in Kathmandu as an EIC representative after its 1804 departure.
<i>Magar</i>	A caste within the former Khasa Empire and within Gorkha.
<i>Mahabharat Range</i>	A significant low-lying mountain range running north of the Tarai, east to west along the base of the Nepalese foothills.
<i>Mahabhul</i>	Alternatively spelled Mahabid; a pass through the Himalayan foothills from Hariharpur to Nepal Valley, referred to within Kinloch's diary. This was potentially a corruption of <i>Mahabharat</i> .

<i>Mahajan</i>	Wholesale merchants, with the ability to secure contracts through large advance payments.
<i>Mahant</i>	The head of a Sannyasi <i>Math</i> , elected by the <i>gurus</i> .
<i>Makwanpur</i>	Settlement and hill-state between Nepal Valley and Bettiah, Bihar.
<i>Malla, Jaya</i>	Raja of Kathmandu in 1767.
<i>Prakash,</i> <i>Malla, Jaya</i>	Raja of Patan in 1767.
<i>Pratap,</i> <i>Malla, Ranjit,</i>	Raja of Bhaktapur in 1767.
<i>Manning, Thomas,</i>	A Sinologist who travelled to Lhasa from Bengal in 1811, meeting the Dalai Lama.
<i>Mark, Padre,</i>	A Capuchin monk stationed in Bettiah whom the 1767 encountered. Referred to in Kinloch's journal as Padrey Merk.
<i>Math</i>	A South Asian term for a Sannyasi monastery, or temple.
<i>Maunder</i>	A South Asian term for a variable weight; 76 pounds in Bengal, 37 ½ in Surat.
<i>McGwire, William,</i>	An EIC agent and opium trader at Patna in the 1760s.
<i>Mir Jafar</i>	Nawab of Bengal from 1757 to 1760 and 1763 to 1765.
<i>Mir Kasim</i>	Nawab of Bengal from 1760 to 1763, replacing Mir Jafar. Mir Kasim rebelled against the EIC in 1763 before being defeated at the battle of Buxar. Mir Kasim also invaded Nepal in support of the Raja of Makwanpur.
<i>Mirtle, William,</i>	Independent contractor in the Himalayas during the 1760s, specializing in timber and maritime supplies.
<i>Misra, Gajraj,</i>	An emissary who served both Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan in 1795 and William Knox in 1802.
<i>Mithila</i>	Also known as Tirhut. Ancient kingdom in the Tarai ruled in the 1760s by the Khandavala dynasty (Rajas of Darbhanga).
<i>Moorcroft, William,</i>	Superintendent of Stud for the EIC who travelled extensively over the Himalayas in search of horse stock to trade.
<i>Moradabad</i>	A town in the present-day state of Uttar Pradesh, where an EIC agent was stationed at the time of the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Morang</i>	A region in eastern Nepal.
<i>Mugitar</i>	A settlement near Sindhuli. See Parsai, Ramchandra.

<i>Muhammad,</i> <i>Ghulam,</i> <i>Muktananda</i>	An Indian surveyor credited by James Rennell for his information about the Deccan region. Kinloch's guide in 1767, Also sometimes written Muctan Unda. Secondary literature suggests Muktananda was a Kashmiri muslim.
<i>Munshi</i>	Colonial South Asian term for an administrative official.
<i>Mustang</i>	A Kingdom in western Nepal, bordering Tibet.
<i>Naik</i>	A rank within the EIC army, specifically for a South Asian officer, subordinate to the Havildar.
<i>Narain, Ram</i>	South Asian trader who operated a trading monopoly at Patna with William McGwire in the 1760s.
<i>Narayan,</i> <i>Dharendra,</i> <i>Narayan,</i> <i>Rajendra,</i>	The Raja of Cooch Behar, installed by Cooch Behari elite after the death of the Bhutanese-supported Rajendra Narayan. The Raja of Cooch Behar, installed by Zhidar's intervention in the early 1770s.
<i>Neville, Francis,</i>	An independent merchant born in Kathmandu, who resided there until the outbreak of the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Newari</i>	A language, culture and ethnic group, based in Nepal Valley and resident in the three cities of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan.
<i>Nizamat</i>	One of two offices within Mughal administration, alongside the <i>Divani</i> . The <i>Nizamat</i> gave territorial rights to the office holder, the <i>Nizam</i> .
<i>Nuwakot</i>	A hill-state and city on the edge of Nepal Valley, en route to Tibet.
<i>Nyima, Palden</i> <i>Tenpai,</i>	The seventh Panchen Lama and one of two political and religious figures of authority in Tibet.
<i>Omrah</i>	A military regional official within Nepal.
<i>Osborn,</i>	A subordinate officer within the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>[unknown]; Ensign</i>	
<i>Paikar</i>	An occupation similar to Baladiya beparis, but wealthier and higher caste
<i>Panchen Lama</i>	One of two political and religious figures of authority within the Gelugpa Bhuddist order in Tibet, the other being the Dalai Lama.
<i>Pandit, Harihar,</i>	An envoy employed by Prithvi Narayan Shah, sent to negotiate an alliance with Palpa against Lamjung in the early 1750s.

<i>Pant, Gangadhar,</i>	An envoy employed by Prithvi Narayan Shah, sent to negotiate an alliance with Tanahu against Lamjung in the early 1750s.
<i>Parbat</i>	Nepalese city-state that allied to Gorkha prior to Prithvi Narayan Shah's ascension.
<i>Parsa</i>	A district in northern Bihar seized by Kinloch in 1767 alongside Barra. Within Parsa was a small <i>gadhi</i> occupied by the EIC.
<i>Rajatarangiri</i>	Sanskrit text detailing the historical narrative of Kashmir.
<i>Parsai,</i> <i>Ramchandra,</i>	A landowner from Mugitar near Sindhuli who allegedly supported the Gorkhalis in 1767.
<i>Parwana</i>	South Asian term for a trading licence.
<i>Pashupatinath</i>	A Hindu temple complex and site of pilgrimage in Kathmandu.
<i>Patan</i>	A City within Nepal Valley, south of Kathmandu. See also Lalitpur.
<i>Patna</i>	A major city on the banks of the Ganges from which the 1767 expedition set out. Patna was an important trading town and EIC political centre.
<i>Peacock, Francis,</i>	An independent trader in the Himalayas during the 1770s.
<i>Phousdar</i>	South Asian term for a petty law officer or collector.
<i>Poolbundy</i>	The practice of building flood defences and measures to alleviate flooding in eighteenth-century South Asia.
<i>Praman</i>	Eighteenth-century South Asian term for a member of the merchant gentry in Patan and Kathmandu.
<i>Pradhan,</i> <i>Abhusasingh,</i>	Resident of Kathmandu and spy for Gorkha in the 1760s.
<i>Pundit</i>	A messenger also entrusted with espionage. The British Raj became increasingly reliant on their Himalayan services in the late nineteenth century.
<i>Puran Giri</i>	A Tibetan Gosain who became an important emissary, intermediary and guide to George Bogle and Samuel Turner. Known within colonial sources as Purangir.
<i>Purnia</i>	Settlement between Morang in Nepal and British Bengal.
<i>Rai, Shitab,</i>	The Raja of Patna in 1767, referred to in Kinloch's journal as <i>Sita Broy</i> .
<i>Rana,</i> <i>Manikantha,</i>	An envoy employed by Prithvi Narayan Shah, sent to negotiate an alliance with Kaski against Lamjung in the early 1750s.

<i>Rao, Amrit,</i>	Brother to the Maratha Peshwa, a friend of Maulvi Abdul Kadir Khan.
<i>Raper, Felix,</i>	EIC Surveyor of Kumaon and Garhwal in the prelude to the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Rennell, James; Major</i>	Surveyor-General for the EIC, tasked with mapping Bengal in the eighteenth century.
<i>Rumbold, Thomas,</i>	EIC chief at Patna in 1767, a member of the Bengal Council and later Governor of Madras
<i>Rutherford, George,</i>	Civil Surgeon at the border town of Moradabad during the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Ryot</i>	Farmers and small traders in eighteenth-century South Asia.
<i>Sadanand</i>	An Indian Surveyor credited by James Rennell for the information that he provided about the Gujarat region.
<i>Sandy Ghat</i>	A present-day settlement in Bihar north of Patna, where the 1767 expedition paused.
<i>Sarbad</i>	Local term for the 'frontier' in the Afghan-Pakistan borderland.
<i>Sarbadi</i>	Local term for a frontier person in the Afghan-Pakistan borderland.
<i>Sarkar</i>	A regional South Asian territorial unit, a component of a <i>Soubah</i> . The regional governor of this unit was likewise called a Sarkar, sometimes referred to as <i>Circar</i> .
<i>Saunders, Robert,</i>	EIC Surgeon who travelled to Tibet for the expedition of Samuel Turner, 1783.
<i>Sen, Digbandhan,</i>	Raja of Makwanpur from 1764, brother-in-law to Prithvi Narayan Shah.
<i>Sen, Hemkarna,</i>	Raja of Makwanpur, father of Prithvi Narayan Shah's wife.
<i>Settar, Mirza,</i>	A Bengali merchant contracted to provide George Bogle with supplies.
<i>Sewak, Hari Mahant,</i>	A prominent religious figure at Dehra Dun who was noted for passing on daily information to the Gorkhali soldiers during the Anglo-Nepalese War.
<i>Shah II, Alam,</i>	The Mughal emperor from 1760 to 1788.
<i>Shah, Bahadur,</i>	Second son of Prithvi Narayan Shah, brother to Pratap Singh Shah, and regent during the reign of his nephew Rana Bahadur Shah.
<i>Shah, Girvanyuddha,</i>	Raja of Nepal from 1799 to 1816, during the Knox residency and the Anglo-Nepalese War.

<i>Shah, Narabhupal,</i>	Raja of Gorkha from 1716 to 1743, father to Prithvi Narayan Shah.
<i>Shah, Pratap Singh,</i>	Raja of Nepal, 1775 to 1778. First son of Prithvi Narayan Shah and Narenda Laxmi Devi, elder brother to Bahadur Shah, father of Ran Bahadur Shah.
<i>Shah, Prithvi Narayan,</i>	Raja of Gorkha and Nepal, 1743 to 1775.
<i>Shah, Rana Bahadur,</i>	Raja of Nepal from 1778 until his abdication in 1799. Until 1794, rule was administered by regents.
<i>Shamarpa</i>	Brother to Lobsang Palden Yeshe, the sixth Panchen Lama; regent to Palden Tenpai Nyima, the seventh Panchen Lama.
<i>Shigatse</i>	A city in Tibet and traditional residence of the Panchen Lama.
<i>Shore, John; Governor-General</i>	Governor-General in Bengal at the time of the Kadir Khan expedition.
<i>Shuja-Ud-Daulah</i>	The Nawab of Awadh from 1754 to 1775, opposing the EIC at the Battle of Buxar.
<i>Simtokha</i>	A strategically important <i>dzong</i> in Bhutan.
<i>Sindhuli Gadhi</i>	A fortification and settlement in the Nepalese foothills, on the road to Nepal Valley from Janakpur.
<i>Singh Thapa, Chumpan</i>	A petty raja within the foothills who allegedly informed Shah of the EIC's approach in 1767.
<i>Singh, Abhiman</i>	Father-in-law to Prithvi Narayan Shah and father to Narendra Laxmi Devi, a Rajput chief in Varanasi.
<i>Singh, Chait,</i>	The Raja of Benares at the time of George Bogle's expedition.
<i>Singh, Karna,</i>	The Raja of Morang in 1774; requested EIC intervention when invaded by the Gorkhalis.
<i>Singh, Moon,</i>	A Jemadar who was court martialled by Kinloch on 7th October 1767. Potentially the anglicanization of Mun Singh.
<i>Singh, Nabir</i>	Regional Gorkhali commander who refused George Foxcroft permission to continue to Kathmandu in 1783.
<i>Singh, Pratap,</i>	The Raja of Darbhanga at the time of the 1767 expedition. See also Khandavala.
<i>Singh, Tribhuvan,</i>	Courtier during the regency of Subaranaprabha who objected to the Knox residency.
<i>Singha, Agam,</i>	Himalayan petty <i>Raja</i> who claimed a hereditary <i>Kirat</i> chieftainship and who had been dispossessed by the Gorkhas

<i>Singye, Jigme,</i>	<i>Druk Desi</i> of Bhutan from 1776 to 1788.
<i>Siraj-Ud-Daulah</i>	The Nawab of Bengal from 1756 to 1757, opposing the EIC at the Battle of Plassey
<i>Sirdar</i>	A military regional governor within eighteenth-century Nepal with jurisdiction over civilian authorities.
<i>Sivalik Range</i>	A significant low-lying mountain range running encompassing the Tarai, parallel but south of the Mahabharat range.
<i>Sonam Lhundub,</i> <i>Sonam,</i> <i>Soubab</i>	<i>Druk Desi</i> of Bhutan from 1768 to 1773. Alternatively called <i>Shidariva</i> in colonial sources. See also Zhidar. Officials who effectively replaced exiled petty rajas in hillforts such as Makwanpur, acting as local governors in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The term also designated the region that they governed.
<i>Srinagar</i>	Ancient capital city of Kashmir.
<i>Subedar</i>	A South Asian military rank.
<i>Sultan, Tipu</i>	The sultan and de facto ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore, 1782 to 1799.
<i>Tanahu</i>	A city-state within Nepal.
<i>Tarai</i>	A thick band of malarial jungle stretching along the feet of the Himalayas and most of the border between present day Nepal and India.
<i>Tashichodzong</i> <i>Thar-Ghar</i>	The capital compound in Bhutan and residence of the <i>Druk Desi</i> . Nepalese term for the elite families with traditional links to the royal family.
<i>Thomson,</i> <i>[unknown],</i> <i>Tirhut</i>	Independent contractor in Bengal during the 1770s. Also known as Mithila. An Ancient kingdom in the Tarai ruled in the 1760s by the Khandavala dynasty (Rajas of Darbhanga).
<i>Tista</i>	A river running from the Eastern Himalayas through Sikkim, Bengal and Bangladesh. Sometimes referred to as Teesta.
<i>Tiwari, Kanak</i> <i>Nidhi,</i> <i>Turner, Samuel;</i> <i>Captain</i> <i>Ulipur</i>	A businessman who had prospered in Palpa prior to Gorkhali conquest. An EIC officer and envoy to Tibet in 1783. Settlement in northern Bengal, wherein James Rennell came into conflict with the local ruler and wider population.

<i>Upadhyaya, Kirtira Jananda,</i>	A member of the nobility of Kathmandu in the 1760s and a spy for Gorkha.
<i>Upadhyaya, Ram,</i>	A <i>sadu</i> , the royal priest to the Palpa Raja, exiled to EIC territory at the time of the Anglo-Nepalese War, who provided a map for Francis Buchanan-Hamilton.
<i>Vairagi</i>	South Asian term for a holy man who travelled northern India, similar to a <i>gosain</i> .
<i>Vakil</i>	A term for a South Asian envoy, a messenger invested with greater responsibility than a <i>barkara</i> .
<i>Vamśavalis</i>	Historical narratives of Nepal, collected and translated by a series of EIC residents and scholars.
<i>Verelst, Henry; Governor</i>	EIC Governor of Bengal at the time of the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Woodman, [unknown]; Ensign</i>	A subordinate officer within the 1767 expedition to Nepal.
<i>Yeshé, Lobsang Palden,</i>	The sixth Panchen Lama and one of two political and religious figures of authority in Tibet
<i>Yumila</i>	A city state within the <i>Chaubisi Rajya</i>
<i>Zhidar</i>	<i>Druk Desi</i> of Bhutan, 1768 to 1773. Alternatively called <i>Shidariva</i> in colonial sources. See also Lhundub, Sonam.
<i>Zimpe</i>	Zhidar's nephew and military commander against the EIC in 1773.